

THE RUSSIAN REVIEW



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Past and Present*

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Contributors to This Issue

BORIS I. NICOLAEVSKY, historian and publicist, is the author of books and articles on the social history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, among which are the following: *Azeo, the Spy*, 1935; *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, 1937; *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (with D. Dallin), 1947.

NINA BERBEROVA is a Russian poet, novelist, and critic; she is the author of two biographies, *Chaikovsky*, Paris 1936, and *Borodin*, Paris, 1938 (in Russian); *Alexandre Block at sen temps*, Paris, 1947, and has contributed fiction and criticism to Russian periodicals in Paris and New York.

MAXIM KOVALEVSKY (1851-1916), scholar of international reputation and author of numerous works in the field of international law, sociology, and economics.

MARC SLONIM is professor of Russian Literature at Sarah Lawrence College and author of *The Epic of Russian Literature: from its Origins through Tolstoy*, New York, 1950.

ANDREW M. HANFMAN studied comparative philosophy, literature, and history of European drama in Berlin, Munich, and Turin; since 1947 has been teaching Russian and German languages and literatures in Kenyon College.

R. V. IVANOV-RAZUMNIK (1878-1946), one of the outstanding representatives of *narodnik* intelligentsia, in the years preceding the Revolution was well known as a critic, publicist, and author of a two-volume *History of Russian Social Thought*, St. Petersburg, 1906.

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THE RUSSIAN REVIEW

Dimitri von Mohrenschildt

Editor

Michael Karpovich

Warren B. Walsh

Alexis Wiren

The aim of "The Russian Review" is to present a non-partisan interpretation of Russian history, civilization, and culture. The Review invites contributions by authors of divergent views, but the opinions expressed in any individual article in this journal are not necessarily those of the editors.

Books for review and correspondence concerning reviews should be sent to Professor Warren B. Walsh, 113 Maxwell, Syracuse University, Syracuse 10, New York.

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The New Soviet Campaign Against the Peasants*

BY BORIS I. NICOLAEVSKY

THE Soviet government has once more opened a campaign against the peasants; a ruthless battle "to break the mujik" is once more being waged.

The attack is being carried out with savage intensity along two fronts. On the one hand, a drive to "enlarge" the collective farms has been launched; the comparatively small collectives which usually encompassed the peasants of a single village are being consolidated into large farms covering thousands of hectares of tillable land. Simultaneously, the very system of labor organization inside the collective is being altered: its original basic unit, the small "link" consisting of 5 to 10 peasants, is being superseded by the large brigade comprising 100 to 150 agricultural workers.

A great deal of space is devoted to these "reforms" in the Soviet press. The Kremlin's journalists write glowingly of the limitless prospects opening before this newest technique in agriculture and make optimistic prophecies regarding the rate of future development of Soviet economy on the basis of the system of enlarged collectives. The social aspects of the current reforms are, however, passed over in silence; yet it is obvious that the true motivation of the new campaign against the peasants is social rather than economic.

A study of the available materials indicates that the Soviet government has initiated the present reforms mainly in order to eradicate the pre-revolutionary rural social structure and stamp out all traces of individualism among the peasants.

It is true that the basic ideas behind the present reforms stem directly from the policies of enforced collectivization originated in 1929 and that in a number of ways these reforms are a repetition or extension of the measures pushed through by the government during the last two decades. Taken as a whole, however, they are so radical a step towards the utter enslavement of the Russian peasant and the complete destruction of the fundamental structure

*This is a translation of a somewhat shortened version of the author's article which appeared in the January, 1951, issue of the *Novyi Zhurnal* [Ed.].

of the Russian village that we are fully justified in saying that we are witnessing the beginning of an important new phase in the long drawn out battle between the Communists and the peasants. The ruthless and inhuman machine of the totalitarian Communist State grinds on to liquidate not just the *kulaks* but the peasants as a class.

The true meaning of the reforms becomes apparent only when they are viewed in the light of the upheavals which occurred in the Soviet village during the war and postwar years. Soviet rural communities, all completely collectivized before the outbreak of hostilities, passed through a profound crisis during the war. In one form or another, more or less extensive stock-taking of the comparative virtues of the collective system of agriculture took place in every village and hamlet of the Soviet Union and the net balance was not very often in favor of the *kolkhoz*.

This was especially apparent in the regions occupied by the Germans and their Axis partners. In most cases the collectives in these regions were liquidated. This was not done on orders of the occupying powers, for on the whole the German authorities were inclined to retain the collectives regarding them as a ready-made tool for extracting food products from the country. The peasants proceeded to liquidate the collectives on their own initiative, often in the face of German opposition. They were seldom deterred by shortages of farm animals and agricultural machinery. Despite the difficulties occasioned by the lack of draft animals and equipment, the peasants, having gone back to individual farming, managed to plant and harvest their crops. In spite of extensive German grain requisitions, the peasant had more to eat than under the Communists.

It is, of course, true that the cities suffered, but all cities were short of food during the war and it cannot be proved that the cities in the zone of German occupation were worse off than those remaining under Soviet rule.

The foregoing observations are perforce over-simplified since authoritative source materials on life in rural Russia under German occupation have not been collected, let alone studied. One fact does emerge beyond any doubt: the history of the collective farms under German occupation shows that Russian peasants have not accepted the *kolkhoz*. The Soviet state can maintain the collectives only by its usual methods of violence and terror. The rural population of the Soviet Union is against collectivization and should the

yoke of Communist dictatorship be lifted off the shoulders of the peasants the agricultural *kolkhoz* is bound to disappear.

Though varying in form and scope, the same process of liberation from the confines of the collective system occurred in those regions which escaped German invasion.

While Soviet rule continued in such regions, circumstances forced the government to loosen its hold on the farming community. Many villages were all but stripped of men and all farming operations had to be carried on by women who have always proved less "cooperative." Terroristic methods were found to be less effective while the need for grain increased a hundredfold. The stimulating effect of self-interest was needed to raise agricultural productivity and the authorities preferred to wink at the increased area of a peasant woman's private garden or additional cow. The sale of milk in the city soon became a most important source of farm income in suburban areas; according to eyewitness accounts, the peasant milk-woman became the prototype of the new class of Soviet "rich" in wartime Moscow. Of course, the "opulence" of these peasant milk peddlers might not be particularly enviable according to Western standards but it was noticeable enough against the dark background of starvation.

In the absence of statistical data it is difficult to estimate the precise extent of the revival of private initiative, but even official Soviet sources admit that it was a mass phenomenon. Thus, the *Bolshevik*, commenting on the September 19, 1946, joint decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. states:

The Decision notes that the misappropriation of communal lands in the collectives has once more become a mass phenomenon. *Kolkhoz* is either arbitrarily seized by individuals to increase the area of their private garden plots or illegally allotted to them by the *kolkhoz* management or chairman to augment individual holdings to the detriment of the collective's economy.¹

In connection with this joint decision several interesting if fragmentary bits of information appeared in the Soviet press. For example we learn that in the spring of 1946 in the Kuibishev region alone there were 11,760 individual cases of seizure of *kolkhoz* land for private gardens; in the Krasnoyarsk territory there were quite a few cases of peasants owning considerable numbers of live stock;

¹*Bolshevik*, September, 1946, p. 33.

one Eva Kapoto was the criminal possessor of 15 head²; in the Bazarno-Karabulak district of the Saratov region between 25 and 30% of all collective farmers did not work out the prescribed minimum number of labor days for the *kolkhoz* during 1943-45, a sure indication that they were primarily occupied with the cultivation of private plots.³

Closer investigation would doubtless show that most of the private gardens and plots did not exceed one hectare (2½ acres) and that the wicked Eva Kapoto's 15 head were pigs or sheep rather than cows, but that is beside the point for the system of moral weights and measures employed in the U.S.S.R. is unique, and by those standards the offenses of the Kuibishev, Krasnoyarsk, and other peasants were unpardonable.

During the war both the local and central authorities found it expedient to overlook these crimes against the collective. This was so unusual that rumors began to spread that the Soviet government itself was convinced of the impracticability of the collective farming system and that after the war either the *kolkhozes* would be abolished or at least the pressure on the peasants would be relaxed. There is reason to believe that some local authorities encouraged these rumors since they considered (with good reason) that such hopes for the future would make it easier for the long-suffering peasantry to bear the onerous burdens of wartime.

Postwar reality did not justify the peasants' hopes; no relaxation followed. On the contrary, immediately after the termination of military operations on the German front the Soviet government opened hostilities on the interior or peasant front. One turn of the screw was followed by another.

Naturally, the first to feel the squeeze were the communities that had been under German rule. Here every village was rigorously "combed" by the MGB (security police). All active participants in the liquidation of collectives were either shot or sent to concentration camps. In regions where the peasants had shown particular enthusiasm in disbanding the collectives the MGB often used the method of wholesale exile, shipping entire villages to the East: the left bank of the Volga, Siberia, Kazakstan, and other "underdeveloped" regions. Settlers from the interior were brought to the lands so liberated and, of course, the collectives were reinstated according to the letter of Stalin's "Statutes for Agricultural Asso-

²*Sotsialisticheskoe selskoe khozyaistvo*, September, 1946, p. 25.

³*Bolshevik*, September, 1946, p. 28.

ciations." However, since in the regions of former German occupation economic and security factors are inextricably mixed, the post-war events in these districts may not form a proper basis for conclusions concerning the agrarian policies of the Soviet government.

In this respect, the history of collectives in the territories not subject to German penetration is far more illuminating. In 1945-46 a thorough purge of *kolkhoz* administrations was carried out in all interior regions. In the Kostroma region, for instance, more than half the *kolkhoz* chairmen⁴ were dismissed while in other regions the purges were even more extensive. The purpose of the cleansing operations was to get rid of managing personnel which, during the war, had in any way yielded to private ownership tendencies of the rank and file in the collectives or otherwise fallen under their evil influence. The displaced managers, chairmen, etc., most of whom had originally been elected by the *kolkhoz* members and hence had some ties with the local population, were superseded by new appointees from above, often complete strangers to the community. There is evidence to show that many such administrative posts were given to "heroes" of the war or disabled veterans having previous experience with "political work" in the army or NKVD (Commissariat of Internal Affairs).⁵

In this manner the government installed its own "new brooms" which could be depended on to "sweep clean" in the villages. True, the net result of these changes was to lower the caliber of the managing personnel and impair agricultural efficiency—even Andreev in his report to the Politbureau felt it necessary to point out the dangers inherent in such wholesale replacements—but the government achieved its aims and in 1945, 1946, and 1947 the "new brooms" assiduously swept out all the deplorable consequences of wartime relaxations. All the cattle privately raised by the peasants were taken away from them and added to the collective herds. The expanded private gardens around the peasants' huts shrank to their minimal dimensions as established in the Decree of May 27, 1939, and in some cases to even less than the legal minimum.

All minor alleviations permitting a modicum of private enterprise on the fringes of the collective, alleviations for which the peasants had fought so hard in the thirties, were done away with. Relaxations of the rules countenanced during the war years were a thing of the

⁴Andreev in his Report to the Politbureau, February, 1947.

⁵An article by one such chairman appears in the *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* for November, 1947.

past. The monopolistic rights of the collectives as they had existed on the eve of the war were re-established in full. The famous May 27, 1939, Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Sovnarkom was solemnly reaffirmed by the joint Decision of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers on September 19, 1946, and thus became the official basis for all subsequent agrarian policies of the Communists.

However, these policies had to be put into effect under postwar conditions which differed in many ways from those existing in 1939. For one thing, the frame of mind of the peasants had changed. The demobilized soldiers, their recent bloody fighting scarcely forgotten, were in no mood to be bullied; nor were the women, who had become the majority of the working force on the farms, particularly docile, especially since working conditions in the villages had become much harder since before the war.

In order to stimulate the peasants' will to work the Soviet government at first took a rather curious line designed to increase the agricultural output on the basis of self-interest. The person responsible for carrying out this policy was Andreev, a member of the Politbureau, who in September, 1946, was appointed head of a special Committee for Collective Farm Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. Andreev was responsible for implementing the entire collective farm program until the beginning of 1950.

Even before the war Andreev had been opposed to the "mania of giantism" and was known as a supporter of the policy of grouping *kolkhoz* workers into small "links." In the years before the war two systems of organizing the working force of a collective had been evolved: the peasants were grouped either into small "links" of 5 to 10 individuals or into larger brigades which then consisted of 50 to 60 workers on the average.

In theory the "link" was supposed to be an organic unit of a brigade temporarily detailed to perform some minor task, but in practice the "links" often came to operate as independent units, receiving assignments directly from the *kolkhoz* administration. The question of organization was not purely academic since it had considerable bearing on efficiency and productivity. Seeking to engage the self-interest of the peasants, the government came out in favor of crediting with extra labor-days collective workers who had been particularly instrumental in increasing yields. Since it was next to impossible to single out exceptional efforts in a large brigade, the system of labor organization based on the larger units did not

readily lend itself to the "individual reward" system. For this reason Andreev was an active supporter of, and practically an apologist for, the "link" method of organization.

Thus, in February, 1939, speaking before the Eighteenth Congress of the Party, Andreev gave what was tantamount to a directive to all Communists:

. . . The complete equalization and depersonalization of farm workers in large brigades is the primary obstacle to the further growth of productivity of labor in the collectives. . . . These depersonalizing and equalizing tendencies must be liquidated. The more we individualize the farm worker's labor—through the use of "links" or individual workers—and the greater the material encouragement given to individual effort, the higher will be the productivity both as regards crops and livestock.

The "links" were given official recognition in a government decree in January, 1941. It was recommended that particular "links" be assigned definite crop areas, groups of livestock, etc., for the entire agricultural year.

The position of the "links" as the basic working unit was further strengthened during the war years and the practice of making a certain field or herd the entire responsibility of a given "link" gained wide acceptance.

After the war the problem of increasing agricultural yields and raising the productivity of *kolkhoz* labor became even more acute, and Andreev pursued with growing vigor his policy of favoring the "link." At its February, 1948, Plenum the Central Committee approved Andreev's ideas and the "link" officially became the mainstay of the labor organization of Soviet collectives. The most responsible Communist publications eulogized the "link form of organization" in articles proving that it

. . . facilitates keeping account of both the quality and quantity of work put in by each *kolkhoznik*, furthers the introduction of the most progressive forms of piece-work, draws the greatest possible number of peasants into active participation in the creative battle for higher yields, brings forward and develops new cadres of talented leaders from among the youth and the women of the collectives and, in general, indoctrinates a new, socialistic attitude towards work.*

In 1947-49 the Soviet government supported and encouraged the "links" in every possible way. Directives radiating from Moscow to the provinces adjured "strict conformity" to the "link" system of labor organization and laid emphasis on "piece-work to be per-

**Bolshevik*, May, 1947, pp. 24-25.

formed by small groups or individuals."⁷ Regions where not enough attention was devoted to the proper organization of the "link system" were severely reprimanded.⁸ The government itself directly recommended widespread introduction of this system of labor organization.⁹ The Party press demanded the permanent assignment of definite crop areas to "stable links."¹⁰

The number of "links" in the collectives was rapidly increased, and their position in the collective structure greatly strengthened. In the Kursk region "links" were set up in practically every *kolkhoz* and in 1947, 96% of the grain acreage in the region was under cultivation by such permanent groups.¹¹ Although the system was not developed to the same degree in other Soviet regions and republics, the tendency was universal. The very success of the movement alarmed the Politbureau, for the "link" system introduced an element which furthered a private ownership attitude.

The small group comprising the "link" was generally selected from among friends and close acquaintances; often the nucleus of a "link" were the working members of a single family. Spurred by the reward of extra labor-days for increased productivity or higher yields, such well-integrated groups worked effectively as a unit. However, whenever the membership of such a unit became more or less stabilized, the "link" naturally developed a tendency to draw away from the rest of the collective organism and consider itself as a separate entity within the body of the *kolkhoz*. The interests of the "link" became paramount and, often, proprietary.

Often, too, the relationship of the collective with such integrated, permanent "links" (in Soviet literature they came to be called "detached links") began to resemble that of pre-revolutionary landowners with their peasant tenants who paid the owner a percentage of the crop for their right to use the land (and who, consequently, were also vitally interested in raising their labor-productivity and the yield per acre). There was, of course, a difference, but it was quantitative rather than qualitative: the *kolkhoznik's* share of the crop was far smaller and the rights of the "links" were far more tenuous than those of the erstwhile tenant. But the peasants in a "detached link" did get a chance to increase their earnings

⁷*Pravda*, June 2, 1949.

⁸*Pravda*, July 5, 1949.

⁹Decision of the Council of Ministers of April 19, 1948.

¹⁰*Bolshevik*, No. 13, 1949, p. 38.

¹¹*Pravda*, February 19, 1950.

by working harder and more efficiently. The incentive to work was there.

The Politbureau could not but view with alarm the rapid rise of these anachronistic tendencies within the collective bosom of the peasants. The *kolkhozes* had been created to prepare the rural population for life in the Communist millennium which was (officially) just about to dawn in the Soviet Union, when suddenly there appeared these individualistic, practically capitalistic growths in the very heart of the collectives. The individualistic, private-ownership tendencies expelled with so much difficulty but a few years ago had managed to creep in again by the back door.

The lamentable ideological situation was further clouded by the fact that while the 1949 harvests were fairly good, the government experienced various delays and difficulties with the grain collections that summer. There is reason to suppose that the Soviet leaders attributed the difficulties to the changed attitude of the peasants and their new enthusiasm for the "detached links." For that reason or another, the fate of the "links" was sealed in the fall of 1949.

The first attacks were launched in the Ukraine, where Deputy Commissar Nikita Khrushchev had been enthroned for some time. There are evidences of previous friction between Khrushchev and the group in the Politbureau to which Andreev belonged; one cannot, for instance, ascribe to mere forgetfulness the failure of Khrushchev in his speeches before the Ukrainian Party Congresses in 1948 and 1949 to pay at least some lip service to the "link" system,¹² for during those years it was *de rigueur* to sing the praises of this system of labor organization whenever one talked about collective farms, and Khrushchev talked about collective farms and farming a great deal. Whatever the personal relationship between Khrushchev and Andreev's group in the Politbureau, speeches in the Ukraine in the autumn of 1949 began to sound quite different from the pronouncements made by the leading lights of the Committee for Collective Farm Affairs headed by Andreev. At the end of 1949, construction was started on the first "agro-city" in the U.S.S.R. Significantly, the site chosen for this new development was the 15,000 hectare "OGPU" *Kolkhoz* near the town of Cherkassy in the heart of the Ukraine. All workers of the collective are to be moved into this "city."

What went on behind the scenes we have no way of knowing, but late in 1949, Khrushchev was transferred to Moscow where he was nominated secretary of both the Central Committee and the Moscow

¹²*Bolshevik*, No. 10, 1948 and No. 3, 1949.

Committee of the Communist Party. In the February 19, 1950, issue of *Pravda* there appeared a long article entitled, "Against Perversions in the Organization of Labor in the Collectives," and directed against Andreev. In violation of a long-established tradition in favor of members of the Politbureau, Andreev was identified by name as the person responsible for the "link" policy of labor organization, which policy the article branded as erroneous. An article of this type in *Pravda* could only appear as the result of a decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee or of the Politbureau. Andreev, naturally, at once acknowledged his mistakes and confessed the error of his ways.

The new agrarian policy designed to smash the foundations of the economic and social structure of the village and destroy what remained of the rural pattern of existence was launched.

As mentioned above, the attack proceeded along two fronts. The main drive was directed at enlarging the physical size of the collectives. Before the war each *kolkhoz* united the peasants of a single village or hamlet and was, therefore, in some ways a continuation of the pre-revolutionary *obshchina* or village commune. In fact, some larger villages were broken up into several collectives. Before the war, the average *kolkhoz* comprised approximately 85 family units and farmed between 550 and 570 hectares (averages for the entire U.S.S.R.). According to official statistics, the tillable land at the disposal of over two thirds of the collectives in the thickly populated regions of the Soviet Union did not exceed 150 to 200 hectares.

A war of extinction is now being fought against such small units. In the Moscow region, where the new reforms were first initiated, there were 6069 collectives as of January 1, 1950; by June 20, the number of separate units was reduced to 1668.¹³ The drop in numbers is about the same for other regions. Thus, in the Yaroslavl region, 3890 collectives were consolidated to form but 963,¹⁴ in the Byelorussian S.S.R., the number shrank from 9771 to 3279,¹⁵ and so on. In other words, 3 to 5 old collectives were merged to create one huge farm.

The result was that each new giant unit had a greatly increased crop acreage. Overall statistics are not yet available, but we do know that now the tillable area per collective is 712 hectares in the

¹³*Bolshevik*, No. 12, 1950, p. 50.

¹⁴*Pravda*, October 27, 1950.

¹⁵*Pravda*, November 14, 1950.

Moscow region and upward of 1500 hectares in the Ryazan region.¹⁶ Scattered items appearing in the press indicate that in the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and other grain producing sections the fusion process was carried to even greater extremes, and that the government succumbed to the mania that was but yesterday contemptuously called "reckless giantism." Occasional mention is made of collective farms covering 13-15,000 hectares.

Simultaneously with the "enlargement" campaign, increasing attacks are being directed against the "link" as the basic unit of labor organization. The "link" has been subjected to so much harsh criticism in the Soviet press that it is obvious that its rôle as the basic labor unit is a thing of the past. Doubtless the "link" will continue to exist, but only as a small temporary unit within the brigade, i.e. as a transient detail of a few men for the performance of minor tasks. The center of gravity of the farm labor organization has definitely been shifted to the larger brigade. The brigades have also been subjected to the "enlargement" process; the new brigades comprise 100 to 150 or more workers selected for their assorted skills so that each brigade might perform the various operations required in mechanized agriculture.

Technological considerations are the official reason advanced for this agglomeration of working units. In his first articles after becoming the new dictator of the collectives, Khrushchev repeatedly emphasized the fact that small collectives cannot fully utilize all the many advantages offered by modern agricultural machinery and hence must yield to larger farms in the interests of technical progress.¹⁷

The demands of technical progress are, also, invoked to justify abandonment of the practice of assigning "detached links" to specific crop areas in favor of the policy of creating a single "production brigade" as "the basic form of cooperative labor organization permitting the most efficient utilization of large farm machinery."¹⁸

Soviet technical and economic journals all carry numerous articles describing these marvelous new machines which are now presumably being shipped to the collectives in vast numbers. According to these periodicals the Machine-Tractor Stations in many sections are now

¹⁶*Sotsialisticheskoe zemledelie*, October 10, 1950.

¹⁷*Pravda*, April 25, 1950.

¹⁸Decisions of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers regarding preparation for the sowing campaign. *Pravda*, March 17, 1950.

fully provided with everything necessary to mechanize all the agricultural processes connected with the production of cereals.¹⁹

Whereas before, under Andreev, in the attempt to raise the productivity of labor and increase yields, emphasis was laid on the human being, on the peasant by virtue of whose creative activity the crops were produced, now the first place in the scheme of things is occupied by the machine. Communist journalists sing hymns to the tractor and bow in worship before the combine.

It is not difficult to show, however, that the true reasons for this sudden vociferous glorification of the machine in the service of mankind are sociological rather than technological. The potentialities of the tractor and harvester are painted in glowing colors in order to divert attention from the living human being, to hide the fact that in this newest era of totalitarian Communist rule man is destined to be not the creative master but the passive victim of the historic process.

The campaign to liquidate small villages and transfer their inhabitants to collective centers is now nation-wide. Much is being written and said about the construction of special "kolkhoz-towns" or "agro-cities" which are to incorporate the very latest developments of science and engineering. As mentioned above, one "agro-city" has been started near Cherkassy, another is about to be founded somewhere near Saratov; engineers are reportedly working on plans for "agro-cities" in other districts.

The construction of these "agro-cities" is, of course, very much in the planning or "future" stage, but the destruction of small villages with the consequent forced transfer of the peasants to new collective centers is definitely in the present. Thus, a new, enlarged "Kalinin Kolkhoz" is being created near Vysokov in the Moscow region through the consolidation of 13 small collectives. All the peasants are to be moved to three of the villages while the other 10 hamlets (comprising over 67% of the present dwellings) are to be razed.²⁰ If this proportion is adhered to in other parts of the country more peasant houses will be destroyed by Khrushchev's agrarian experiment than were lost due to the German invasion.

It is not difficult to imagine under what primitive conditions the transferred populations will be forced to live. New housing for them will not be built tomorrow, nor the day after, since even plans for

¹⁹*Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 5, 1950, p. 45.

²⁰*Moskovskaya Pravda*, October 25, 1950.

such construction have not yet been worked out. We are told that plans for cattle barns in a number of collectives were drawn up last spring, but that actual construction lagged to such an extent that *Pravda* was forced to sound the alarm, listing a number of regions where "serious delays in preparing for winter have occurred."²¹

Since the Moscow region is not included in this list, one may conclude that the rate of construction in this region is "satisfactory." In view of the fact that, according to the *Moskovskaya Pravda* of October 4, the building plans for the Moscow region are only 24% fulfilled for sheep cotes, 19% for cattle barns, and 15% for chicken coops, one may well wonder what the rate of accomplishment is in the districts where the "serious delays" have occurred.

Khrushchev's reforms are being carried out at maximum speed and at the expense of an enormous waste in human material and resources. All the more reason to ask, "Why? What are the objectives of the Soviet government"?

The Soviet press itself supplies the answers. The Khrushchev operation is necessary because the system of small collectives with their "detached links" did not provide sufficient means to keep the peasants in subjection. Driven into the prewar collectives, Soviet peasantry remained hostile to both the *kolkhoz* system and to the government enforcing it. The rural population managed to adapt itself to the new order, to find its soft spots and came to exert a certain influence over the lower echelons of officialdom. In Lenin's words, "the mujik" once more "crept up to the command posts of the régime" in the attempt to "subvert its rule." Certain irregularities in the operation of the government apparatus became apparent, even the vital part—that dealing with grain collections—was affected.

It is precisely the difficulties with grain collection that caused the change in policy. Only this time, instead of seeking a compromise solution, instead of following the example of Lenin and instituting a new NEP, the Soviet government chose to answer the "mujik's" advance with a decisive counter-attack, the primary tactical purpose of which is to destroy the enemy's bases.

And, the enemy, to Stalin's Communists, is the individualism of the Russian peasant. The introduction of the new agrarian policies shows that the Communists have abandoned all desire to reach any

²¹*Pravda*, October 13, 1950.

compromise with this spirit of individualism and that they are now ready to wage a battle to the death against it.

Up to the present, the Soviet régime, by giving the peasant a chance to increase his income through personal initiative, allowed him to remain a peasant farmer in the ancient sense: even though driven into collectives the individual "mujik" could himself perform the full cycle of farm operations. Khrushchev's policy is to do away with the peasantry as a social class; the Russian "mujik" is to be replaced by workers specialized in various agricultural skills.

The Communist party apparatus, penetrating as it does every branch and department of the Soviet state to watch and control its slightest function, both governmental and economic, had, up to now, one weak spot: the countryside. Numerous as its membership has been, the Party has never had many adherents in the villages. For example, in the Moscow region (regarding which we have the most reliable data) only 20% of the old collectives had Party cells.²² That is, before the "enlargement" reforms, 4 out of 5 collectives escaped direct supervision of the Party. Of course, Communist propaganda reached all the collectives, and every village was visited by district Party functionaries, but they could not and did not enter into the intimate economic life of the collectives. Consequently, the Party was unable to exercise full economic control of the process of agricultural production.

In order to make sure that the new reforms are carried out, the régime has decided to strengthen the Party structure in the villages. The primary task of the Communist Party now is to organize party cells in every single collective; this is feasible only if the number of collective farm units is reduced. In some districts, the Party has already achieved its aim; thus, in the Mytashchi District, where previously there were Party organizations in only 38% of the collectives, not a single *kolkhoz* now lacks a party cell, and, in addition, the membership of the cells has been appreciably increased.²³ Other districts of the Moscow region are similarly approaching "perfection." No doubt the same process is taking place in other parts of the Soviet Union. The network of Party units is spreading over the countryside and penetrating every village and collective farm. The next step is the creation of Party groups and cells inside all the enlarged production brigades.

The result of this infiltration by the Party apparatus will be the

²²*Moskovskaya Pravda*, September 16, 1950.

²³*Moskovskaya Pravda*, October 22, 1950.

complete liquidation of every trace of local, peasant control. No aspect of economic life in the remotest hamlet will escape the supervising eye and policing hand of the Party.

To what lengths the Party will go in its control over the collectives is shown by incidental reports which sometimes manage to slip into the Soviet papers. Thus, in the course of a description of the potato harvest in the "Pamiat Iliche" Collective, we are given a picture of the potato-digging machine being followed by women who pick up the potatoes and who are in turn shadowed by a Party supervisor who watches to see how many potatoes are missed by each woman.²⁴

Complete control over the peasants is the primary aim of the Soviet government, but neither the character nor the scope of the problem can explain the speed with which the government is proceeding. The tempo of the reforms is obviously dictated by other considerations.

The "enlargement" campaign is assuming the aspects of a geological upheaval. In order to put it through, the Soviet régime is forcing the liquidation of countless small villages and the transfer of millions of peasants to new "unified collective centers." Previously, each tiny center of population had its own *kolkhoz*. Now, each enlarged collective embraces the peasants of 3 to 5 former villages; in some cases, particularly in the Moscow area, as many as 12 to 15 villages have been welded into a single unit. From the very beginning of the reforms, the government has emphasized that every enlarged collective must have a new, *single* center of population to which all members of the merging collective should be moved. At first, it appeared that this colossal transfer operation was to take place gradually, over a number of years. Any hopes that the migration would thus be rendered less painful were soon dashed. To quote briefly from an editorial in the November 22 *Izvestiya*:

The immediate task of all local soviets and their rural organizations, *kolkhoz* administrations, is to complete during the winter months (of 1950-51) all necessary preparations for evacuating the smaller villages so that rapid construction for the accommodation of their inhabitants at the new centers of the enlarged collectives may be started with the arrival of spring.

The authoritative tone of the *Izvestiya* editorial indicates that it is based on new decisions by the appropriate government and Party officials and that its content must be considered as an official

²⁴*Moskovskaya Pravda*, October 22, 1950.

directive. It follows that Soviet leaders intend to carry out the enforced transfer of the peasants not over a period of years but within the next few months. It is important to realize the scope of the proposed operation.

According to official Soviet statistics there were about 19 million family units in agricultural collectives in 1938. Approximately the same number of houses were occupied by this rural population. Appreciable changes have taken place since 1938; on the one hand, the territory of the U.S.S.R. has greatly increased, while, on the other hand, quite a few peasant homes were destroyed by the German invasion and have never been re-built. It is, therefore, difficult to establish a precise figure for the number of peasant houses extant today, but we will not be far off if we set the number at approximately 20 million. As mentioned above, the "enlargement" process involves the creation of a single center unifying and replacing 3 to 5 old villages. Since it may be assumed that the new centers are set up around the larger present collectives, the proportion of peasant families transferred will be somewhat lower than 1 to 3. Nevertheless, the total number of rural households subject to removal cannot be less than several million. In other words, it is proposed to raze several million houses and huts, each with its usual out-buildings, and to level off several million vegetable gardens in addition to countless berry patches, orchards, etc. The transferees are all promised nice new houses with all sorts of facilities in the new centers, as well as new garden plots, out-structures, barns, coops, etc. All this within a few months!

Such promises, of course, are pure buncombe. No country in the world, not even the prosperous and industrially powerful United States, could hope to carry out so stupendous a program in so short a time. How fantastic, therefore, it is to suppose that anything of the kind can be accomplished by the economically backward U.S.S.R. which has not yet been able to patch up all the damage occasioned in the villages during the war. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of peasant families still huddle in dugouts or temporary, flimsy barracks, and yet the total number of peasant houses damaged by the invading German armies can scarcely equal one third the number of houses to be broken up during the spring migration. No matter how glowingly the Soviet papers may write about the beautiful new cottages that will await the transferred peasant families, it is obvious that if any such dream cottages are really built it will be only for show in a few "Potemkin" villages. For the vast majority of the rural population, the transfer will mean leaving a house, which although it may be poor and inadequate

is at least private and separate (and the "inalienable rights" to which Stalin's statutes on collectives "guaranteed" the peasant), to live in barracks, doubtless differing little in architecture from those of concentration camps.

The Soviet régime could not afford to build anything better, even if it desired to do so.

Why, especially in view of the above, the emphasis on speed? Why must thousands of collectives be consolidated, millions of peasants uprooted *this year*?

We will seek the answer to these questions in vain if we close our eyes to the essential fact that all the postwar policies of the Soviet government are directed to only one end: total preparation for total war. The agrarian policy is no exception: in carrying out the consolidation of villages the Soviet régime is urgently attempting to create in its zone of the interior what its leaders believe will be the most advantageous conditions for their régime in time of war.

At first glance, this assertion may seem improbable. It is quite obvious that the forced transfer of millions of peasant families from private homes to leaky, communal barracks will not make for more amicable relations between them and the régime. Hence, one might suppose that elementary common sense would deter the Communists from embarking on an operation whose consequences will antagonize millions of peasants on the eve of war, but it would be naive to think that the Soviet leaders are mad and are deliberately trying to undermine their own position.

The leaders of the Communist Party are no fools; they are, on the contrary, astute and far sighted politicians who have demonstrated time and again that they are excellent judges of what is and what is not to their advantage. They realize as well as anyone the reaction which their policies of "enlargement" and enforced transfer is bound to cause among the peasants. They know that the "mujik" forced into communal barracks will only grow more antagonistic towards the Soviet government. . . .

Our previous questions can now be rephrased to read:

Why in preparing for total war do the Communists, realizing the inimical effects of their agrarian policy, still consider it advantageous to prosecute their furious campaign against the peasant?

There can be only one answer: because the Communists believe that the consequences engendered by the present policy are less dangerous to their régime than what might occur under the status quo or if the controls over the collectives were relaxed.

The Soviet government is basing its preparations for the coming war, the outbreak of which it is doing much to bring about, on the

assumption that it will be a protracted, all-out conflict to the bitter end. The government considers its gravest danger to be a possible collapse in the rear, and that the weakest point there is the peasantry. No matter what the Soviet press proclaims, the actions of the Soviet government show that its leaders harbor no illusions regarding the attitude of the peasants towards the régime. Having noted what took place in the villages during and after the last war, the Soviet leaders cannot help but look on the peasant as a potential enemy.

Since the Communist régime is unable to turn this enemy into a friend, it can only try to put him into a position where he cannot do any harm. The peasant living in his own hut in a small village is difficult to watch and control. While some degree of Communist supervision is feasible now, in time of war when a considerable shrinkage of both the Party and state apparatus is inevitable, every village hut becomes a potential center of resistance, a possible nucleus of inimical forces.

Hence, the primary objective of the Soviet government to insure full and facile control over the peasants. The Communists are forcing the *rapid* transfer of the rural population to the new collective centers in order to keep it under their despotic thumb.²⁵

²⁵The above article was written in December, 1950. Since that time important changes have taken place in the newly inaugurated program for the enlargement of collective farms. The campaign is now coming to an end. Out of a total of 252,000 collective farms which existed in 1949, by January 1, 1951, 180,000 were subjected to the processes of enlargement; out of these 60,000 enlarged collective farms were created. About 65,000 have not yet been enlarged. A part of these are now being subjected to the enlargement operation; others, for one reason or another, were considered unsuited for enlargement. At the same time, the envelopment of the *kolkhozes* and the brigades with a network of Communist cells is proceeding at a rapid tempo. Thus, the USSR is now entering upon the spring sowing campaign with a completely reconstructed collective farm system.

The situation is different in regard to the program of peasant resettlement. From December 1950 to February 1951 intense agitation was carried on in favor of it. This agitation met with a rather cool reception, however, even on the part of a considerable section of the Communist Party. A secret and intense struggle has been going on in regard to the resettlement question. It was finally resolved on March 4-5. In *Pravda* of March 4, Khrushchev published a long article containing the whole program of resettlement. The following day *Pravda* published a short editorial note announcing that, through negligence, Khrushchev's article was published without the proper editorial explanation to the effect that his article was of a controversial nature. This "correction" in itself is an evidence that Khrushchev suffered a decisive defeat on the question of resettlement. All the issues of Soviet papers that have arrived here since that date, support this conclusion. Beginning with March 5, the question of peasants' resettlement disappears completely from the Soviet press. At the moment of writing these lines, it is difficult to make a final conclusion. There can be no doubt, however, that the peasant resettlement project, for the time being at least, has been abandoned.

A Note on Andrey Biely

BY NINA BERBEROVA

IN every country in the world, destiny is peculiar to the individual. Every human being has a destiny of his own; fate presents to each a unique, a never-to-be-repeated facet. In Russia, in addition to their individual destiny, people all too often share in a common destiny allotted to a whole generation. The history of the Decembrists is the history of the fate of a whole generation, and so is that of the Slavophiles and the Westerners. The generation of Soviet writers who perished in the thirties had a common destiny. Russian Symbolism of the beginning of this century, as seen now in retrospect, after it has run its full course from its dawn to its twilight, appears as the history of one generation's destiny.

Among the writers and poets born between the sixties and the early eighties, who attained their full stature at the beginning of this century, Andrey Biely has a prominent place. He is not a truly great poet like Blok; nor did his voice carry across the world like that of D. S. Merezhkovsky, yet his personality most fully reflects his era with its depth, its gropings, its contradictions and achievements, its lofty aspirations, its morbid yearnings, and its often dearly paid-for truths. It was an era of commitment, of self-dedication, of what the French call "*engagement*," long before this concept became fashionable; and its protagonists differed from those who came before and after them by the fact that they were pledged to the ideas they believed in with all their being, their personal life, their material and spiritual integrity; their work and their lives were thus bound together in one tight knot. Whether this was to the advantage of their creative work we cannot discuss here; and the question how far they actually fulfilled their resolve to answer for their lifework to the limit is outside our theme. The figure of Andrey Biely, one link in a chain of many names, bears most impressively witness to the significance, the importance, the "existentialism" of the whole movement.

Biely was born in Moscow. His father, the distinguished mathematician Bugaev, was an eccentric character and a colorful figure on the faculty of the University of Moscow. Between himself and his wife, a beautiful and much younger woman, there was little harmony; and from his earliest childhood the future poet was drawn

into the conflict between his father and mother who gradually came to embody for him exact science the one, and poetry the other. Biely's lifelong secret hostility to his father found a forceful and tempestuous expression in all his novels (except the first one, *The Silver Dove*) and became the dominant theme of his prose writings. Love of woman, never fully requited, and the anxiety about the destiny of Russia were the leitmotifs of his poetry.

Lack of space compels me to oversimplify Biely's intimate drama. I only mention it to illustrate the close connection between his personal life and his work.

He first studied mathematics, then philology, at the University of Moscow. While still an undergraduate, he strove to combine the positivistic ideas of the nineteenth century with the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, groped for a synthesis through the medium of German philosophy, and meditated profoundly upon the nature of Christianity, and the future of his country. At last, he became a convert to Steiner's Anthroposophy. His ultimate break with this movement, which occurred upon his arrival in Germany in 1921, caused him bitter mental anguish. His return to Russia in 1923 came as a result of painful personal experiences in Berlin, of loneliness and the lack of a congenial spiritual atmosphere. His life in the U.S.S.R. where he died in 1934 was a series of not very successful adjustments; and his last years, when his inner life alternated between despair and resignation, were a cruel ordeal.

All he wrote in the course of thirty years may be grouped into four categories, and—a rare phenomenon—in all four domains of his creative work he is equally remarkable. Shall we rank his novels foremost? But he has written verse that will live as long as Russian poetry lives. His essays dealing with the formal values of Russian verse and his investigation of the rhythmical wealth of Russian poetry were an event at the time of their appearance; and his memoirs, written partly in Germany, partly in Russia, are one of those books one never forgets. Novelist, poet, essayist, autobiographer, he left a literary legacy of momentous importance.

His novels, from *Petersburg* (1911) to *The Masques* (1930), are first and last self-revelations. Their most remarkable feature is the exhaustive exposure, unprecedented in Russian literature, of the author's own subconscious, going hand in hand with amazingly subtle solutions of essentially new formal problems. Had Biely's *Petersburg* met with the same response as that which, many years later, brought fame to Joyce's *Ulysses* (and had it found an adequate

translator), this novel doubtless would have exercised a powerful influence upon the world literature of its day; it might have even influenced the literary giants of our own time. Not even Biely's severest critics deny that in prose he has created his own method and his own world. Nowhere near everything of what he wrote is perfect; one may admit that hardly anything is perfect in the sense in which perfection was understood in the nineteenth century; and yet his writings bear the stamp of genius, and he who is deaf to their meaning is deaf to his time.

Biely's poetry, too, is marked by genius, but his poems are much more straightforward than his prose and, paradoxical as it may seem, they spring rather from his conscious mind than his subconscious. This applies in some measure even to his "First Meeting," an extraordinary poem which, together with Block's unfinished "Retribution," forms the gateway through which Russian poetry has gone maybe for a time, maybe forever,—in search not only of new technique but of new goals. Biely and Block were united in a close bond of friendship which at times turned into enmity, a relationship surcharged with dramatic contents. In the history of Russian poetry these two men and these two poems are indissolubly linked.

As to Biely's reminiscences, a few words are in order about the way they were written. In their original form they grew out of a few public lectures given by Biely in Petersburg after Block's death and entitled "Reminiscences of Block." While in Berlin, he began to elaborate and expand them. I had the good fortune to follow closely the progress of the work throughout the winter 1922-23, when he was living with us in a suburb of Berlin. All day he would write, and evenings he would read to us the pages he had written. These were big sheets of paper covered with his large slanting handwriting almost without corrections. The "Reminiscences of Block" gradually expanded into a full-scale picture of a whole era, that of Russian Symbolism. Biely realized that a new title was needed for this work; I suggested "Beginning of the Century," and he agreed to it. Under this title these incomparable memoirs appeared in four issues of the *Epopée*, a Russian periodical symposium published in Berlin. This was the second draft, as it were. In their ultimate form, unfortunately revised to please the Soviet régime, the reminiscences were published in the U.S.S.R. in the thirties (in 3 volumes). The last volume appeared after Biely's death.

The friendship with Block in the first years of our century gave a much-needed impulse not only to Biely's creative work but also

to the growth of his personality. At the end of his life, his reminiscences of Block represented, as it were, the crowning fulfilment of that friendship. In this connection, a still unpublished letter by Biely may be quoted here in its entirety. It was addressed to the poet Vladislav Khodasevich, two days after Block's death. It tells more than anything else about the attitude of Biely toward Block:

August 9, 1921
Petrograd

Dear Vladislav Felicianovich:

Arrived from Tzarskoye on August 8, found your letter. I reply—

Block is no more. He died on the 7th of August, at 11 A.M., after great suffering; his condition had changed for the worse since Monday. He died fully conscious. Funeral services are being held today and tomorrow. The funeral procession will start on Wednesday the 11th, at 10 A.M. He will be buried in the Smolensky cemetery.

Well! What is there to say? To me it is quite plain; he was stifled to death by the oppressive air of life; others would speak out aloud: "How stifling"! He just fell silent and suffocated.

This death to me is the knell of fate. I feel that part of myself has gone with him. It was like this: we did not meet, we hardly spoke, but just Block's "being there" on the physical plane was to me like an organ of sight or hearing; I am aware of this now. One can live blind, to be sure. The blind either die or are illuminated inwardly. And thus his death has been a knock at my door: *awaken or die! Begin—or cease to be!* One has to face it: to be or not to be?

When thou, my soul, wert asking
To perish or to love. . . . [Delvig]

And the soul does ask: to love or to perish; to live a truly human, a *humane* life or to die. The soul cannot live as an orang-outang. And Block's death to me is a call "to perish or to love." He was a poet; that means *fully a human being*; that means a poet of love (not in the vulgar sense). But life is ruthless; and so he perished of suffocation.

This death is the first toll of the bell, the funeral bell or the festive chime? We all, as *fully human beings*, "are standing at the fateful turn": to perish or to love. My heart is with you.

B. Bugaev

This letter leads us to an important question—Biely's attitude toward the Russian Revolution. It is a complex problem, and to deal with it in a few words would hardly do it justice. Nevertheless, I shall try to sum it up. The great upheaval that shook Russia in 1917-18 was at first accepted by Biely as the promise of a message to the world embodied in Russia. But only a year later he was horrified by the "orang-outang age" he now saw threatening European civilization. He lived through the gruesome years 1919-20 in Russia; and after his escape abroad, he sat down at the very

first station (it happened to be Kaunas) and described his experiences in a letter of twenty pages addressed to a person very close to him. The letter was never mailed. As he was taking leave from us before going back to Russia in the autumn 1923, he left this letter, among other papers, with me. It has never been published. I quote some passages:

November 11, 1921
Kovno

. . . To us who since 1917 have lived through the unimaginable scenes of Russian life, your letters from D. were worse than incomprehensible, they seemed outrageous; they were like a mockery sometimes, those letters; more than that, they made us feel that no matter how much we may tell you about Russia, you would understand nothing anyway; in those letters one sensed the naïveté of people who had no experience of the years 1917-20 in Russia, a naïveté . . . amounting to a refinement of cruelty. Yes, there were horrors, *but not those horrors*, more frightful maybe, but not those; there were moments of bliss and joy; there was always death looking you in the face; and with the first snowflakes in 1919, in 1920, there was the sensation that you were being snowed under, buried, cut off from the whole world; that the whole country with its millions was a land of the doomed, an island forever cut off from everything held dear.

. . . Up to Christmas, 1918, I gave a course of lectures and conducted a seminar for workers, worked out the project for a college of drama, took part in about six conferences daily, wrote "Notes of an Eccentric," delivered lectures in the unheated hall of the Anthroposophical Association, attended meetings of the Association; but in January, 1919, I quit, gave up the Anthroposophic meetings and lectures, lay down under a fur coat and hibernated in complete prostration until the spring when the thaw brought back some warmth to my body and soul.

We all, in 1919, were filled with this darkness. In Moscow, the A.s, Sch., M. were shot; W—y went mad with hunger; Prof. Ch. cut his throat in a fit of melancholia; there was not a house without its typhoid case. The temperature in the houses was never above 7° [Réaumur]. Moscow was dark; at night people would pull apart wooden houses for fuel. A.S.P. used to steal firewood to kindle his little stove. Mother walked every day to Smolensky market to sell some old rubbish of hers (I gave her all I could, but it was not enough).

In that period I lived like this.

I had a small room. Books and manuscripts were heaped in the corner; for five months they helped to feed the stove. Every kind of old junk was piled up everywhere, so that my room resembled a second-hand dealer's shop; and in the midst of all this litter and trash, at a temperature of 6-4°, by the dim light of a nearly burnt-out bulb, I would spend hours, my hands in woollen gloves, a cap on my head, my legs growing numb to the knees with cold, preparing material for next day's lecture, working on some project assigned to me by the Theatrical Department, writing the "Notes of an Eccentric," until, exhausted, I would throw myself upon my bed long after midnight. As a result I would not awaken before ten in the morning, to find that no one had thought of keeping any hot water for me. And so, without even a cup of tea, shivering with cold, I would get up and rush from Sadovaya to the Theatrical Department in the Kremlin, hurrying there from conference to con-

ference (I was then in charge of the theoretical section). At 3.30, clad in a fur coat which wasn't mine and which stifled chest and throat, I would trudge along the awful slippery pavements to Devichye-Pole for my dinner, and from there plod all the way to Smolensky market to provide myself with those rotten flat cakes for supper, pushing my way through a louse-infested stinking crowd, with dead dogs underfoot. At five I would drag myself home, only to rush out again at seven to the Proletkult, where I taught young poets to appreciate Pushkin, catching myself the infection of their enthusiasm for poetry. And, at last, at eleven, I staggered home in pitch darkness, stumbling blindly through the deep holes in the snow, almost weeping because the tea left for me would be cold again, and the room so icy as to make one want to scream.

You must understand; this went on not for a day or two, but month after month . . . with every hour a torment; upon the huge cold houses where the pipes would burst (flooding the apartments with water or sewage), snow was falling, and one felt as if one were being snowed under, buried forever, and every little snowflake seemed to widen the distance between the dismal gloom of continuous physical and mental suffering and "all that the heart holds dear."

And then Schubert's "Winterreise" would come to mind and strike a light, and give me the strength to carry on my lectures which kindled new hope in human hearts (people looked to my lecture for moral support in the darkness); and, overcoming the darkness, I would give others *the strength to endure the darkness*. And yet I, myself, lacked that strength and would stretch out my hands for help to you, so far-away. "Dearest, pray for me there"! More than once people told me later: "How I love your Nelly! How much love you have put into that image" (your image in the "Notes of an Eccentric" I was writing then). I hoped for moral support. After all, we must have appeared to you like dying people and, indeed, hunger, cold, arrests, typhus, Spanish flu, nervous overstrain carried away crowds of people. It seemed to me that out of a natural feeling of human compassion, or just out of moral sensitivity, you should have understood what we were in for.

Beginning with the autumn of 1919 I lived like this:

Worn out by my ice-cold room, I moved to another. Out of charity I was given refuge in a room two paces long and one-and-a half wide. The window was puttied up and had no hinged window-pane, that is, no ventilation. Books, manuscripts were piled up on the floor (there was no wardrobe, no dresser). Bed, table, chair—that was all. There was a stove heated with firewood every other day, the temperature was tolerable, but on heating days I risked asphyxiation by the gas escaping from the stove. The flat often resounded with the shrill shouting of the landlady that pierced my walls; and quite often our dinner would be cooked on my stove. Potatoes got mixed up with manuscripts, and once, when I went away for a few weeks, I found upon my return that many sheets of valuable material gathered in museums were missing probably used to wrap up herrings. Every day I would hurry from Presnia to the Rumiantzev or the Historical Museum to copy out extracts in a temperature under the freezing point. At five I would come back to my tiny room. At that time I was giving a course of lectures at the Anthroposophical Association, in a room so cold one's brain was freezing, to an audience sitting around in fur coats and fur caps. Nevertheless, when one of the members succumbed to Spanish flu, he died with a Rosicrucian motto on his lips; so great was the need people had of my lectures, and I think our work was truly valuable. We lifted the

spirit of man, and people had nothing but their spirit to warm them. However, after Christmas I gave up lecturing. I had reached the end of my endurance.

Those bitter moments of feeling utterly forlorn ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?")—I shall never forget. At last, I could stand it no longer; on an impulse I fled from Moscow to Petersburg (tired, broken as I was), and throughout February, March, April, May, and June I slaved there like mad, doing spiritual work in our Free Philosophical Association. You cannot imagine how dozens of souls, awakened by me to self-knowledge, clung to me, how they literally drained me, until, drained to the bottom, I rushed back to Moscow. But once in Moscow, I was again assailed by the clamor: "*Give, give, give us spiritual food!*" It was not easy to give that food to others, since I myself *didn't receive anything from anyone*. . . . And don't forget that during all that period I was taking endless trouble to obtain the permission to leave the country. My request was rejected in February, 1920, and then again in August of that year. In September A. took charge of me and brought me to his house out-of-town. From there I would sally out to town to deliver my lectures (which sustained me materially as they sustained others spiritually). From September to January I wrote a book on the philosophy of culture, as well as working frenziedly on the draft of my reminiscences of Block (first volume). The book on the philosophy of culture has been lost, it was my best theoretical work, I did not lose it myself, others lost it for me (V—v who meant to have a copy taken from it), and another book I had written, *Tolstoy and Culture*, was taken away by a Lithuanian profiteer who promised to have it published abroad—and then vanished into thin air. Again I had no copy, and so this book too has been lost.

And then they lugged me to hospital, where I lay for two and a half months, covered with lice. After that I rushed again from Moscow to Petersburg, went back into harness and worked from March to September. Where did I find the strength, I wonder? I tried again for an exit permit, it was again refused by the Cheka. Then I had a nervous breakdown. Prof. T., the neuropathologist, treated me. I decided to escape illegally, but the Cheka got wind of my plans and foiled them. Then Block died, Gumilev was shot, and at last the young people raised a clamor: "Let Biely go! Or else he will die like Block!" Friends pulled strings and they let me go!

Keep to yourself all I have written to you about Russia, remember that we Russians abroad are watched by the agents of the Cheka.

. . . Enough. I finish this bitter letter. I shall do what I can to have it reach you. Farewell. B.B.

Biely was destined to return to Russia and to die there. Block's fate was to "suffocate" at the very beginning of the "orang-outang age"; Merezhkovsky's fate was to spend thirty years in exile; that of Sologub—to fall silent in Russia, that of Viacheslav Ivanov—to fall silent in Italy. But despite these variations, a common fate governed the destiny of their generation. Russian Symbolism ran its course like a Greek tragedy: born on the eve of a new era of the world, it had its Furies, its sublime conscience, and it went down to defeat in the unequal struggle for eternal values against the "oncoming Huns."

American Impressions*

BY M. M. KOVALEVSKY

II

THERE can be no doubt that America contains the elements if not of an aristocracy, at any rate of a plutocracy. And are these two so very wide apart? After all, the English aristocracy includes a considerable plutocratic element. But it is a peculiar feature of an old country, such as England, that its ruling class is able to absorb and assimilate the élite of the group which we Russians, alone of all the nations of the world, have been calling the "intelligentsia." In America, however, the intelligentsia, which still represents a very thin social layer, is by no means on the side of the multi-millionaires. And the latter, if ever they feel like wooing the intellectuals, prefer those of Europe to their own. There is Carnegie, for instance, with his rather fantastic pacifist scheme. Among his followers there are, to be sure, such men as the venerable Burton, President of Columbia College, but even more important to him are the members of his Paris and London committees as well as the vast network of correspondents recruited from the intelligentsia of most European nations.

American millionaires readily spend their money on the erection of observatories, college buildings, institutes of technology. The libraries of many cities bear the names of rich founders and donors. Numerous picture galleries and museums have been enriched by their generous gifts. A native of Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, after having made millions in business, made a trip to Europe. In London he visited the British Museum, the huge Albert Hall used for concerts, the University. Why not reproduce these institutions in Baltimore, combining them in a single establishment, he thought? Thus originated Johns Hopkins University, one of the most efficient in the United States, with its well-known semi-periodical scientific publications, and next to it the picture gallery (containing much that is second-rate) and the vast concert hall.

Another multi-millionaire, John Rockefeller, who years ago, as he likes to relate, arrived in Cleveland with a few dollars in his pocket

*This is the second excerpt from Professor Kovalevsky's reminiscences of his visits to the United States in 1881 and 1901 [Ed.].

and now heads the powerful Standard Oil trust, spent millions on the foundation of the University of Chicago. But since he is a Baptist himself, scholars belonging to that sect were given a privileged status on the faculty in the matter of salary, whether they were equal to filling the chairs assigned to them or not.

During my second visit to the United States, I was invited to give a course on the history of Russian political institutions at the University of Chicago. During my term, I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the life of the faculty and the student body, attending their celebrations, frequenting their clubs, and maintaining contacts with circles close to the University. Gradually, I got used to much that at first had not only amazed but had shocked me, as it must shock any European scholar. Thus I became reconciled to the fact that it was possible to devote a special course to the Dreyfus Affair; that a visiting French professor could give a series of lectures on French literature in French, only to be told by the students, after its completion, that unfortunately none of them understood the language. . . . Yet the memory of some of the oratory at the annual commencement functions still haunts me. An honorary president had to be elected, and the choice, of course, fell upon the benefactor, Rockefeller. He then delivered a short speech—highly praised in next day's papers for its wit, in which he said, among other things, that not being a legal expert he wouldn't presume to decide whether Jonah in the whale's belly enjoyed the rights of ownership or tenancy.

I shall hardly be wrong in asserting that Rockefeller's University represents rather an educational institution than a place of higher learning and research. That was the part the late Kasso had in mind for Russian universities when he maintained, quite erroneously, in my opinion, that they were not mature enough for creative science, the latter being the proper task of the Academy, while the universities ought to confine themselves to discharging annually a certain number of graduates able to fill various positions in the service of the state. However, my own experience of university life in both Russian capitals, definitely contradicts Kasso's low estimate. Long before becoming members of the Academy, such scholars as Buslaev, Tikhonravov, S. M. Solovyov, B. N. Chicherin, and dozens of younger men utterly devoted to their chosen field—such as Kliuchevsky, Miller, Korsh, Timiriasev,—used to develop new ideas in their lectures which deeply stirred the minds and hearts of their audiences. The textbook professor usually spoke before empty benches. And

if today Russian university students tend to make arrangements between themselves so as to attend lectures in rotation, the reason for this is to be found in the appointment of many professors more distinguished for their official conformity than their academic qualifications.

The farther West, the weaker grows the pulse of spiritual life in the American universities, the more they are subservient to various, often unworthy, interests. California has, in addition to the State University in San Francisco, two private universities. One of these was founded by the widow of a railroad magnate who had made a fortune building one of the railroads spanning the American continent from coast to coast. On its faculty was a certain Ross, whom I had known twenty years before at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore as a young scholar of great promise. Independence of mind was his chief characteristic, and it made him join the ranks of those who are highly critical of the American system of monopolies as well as of the federal railroad policy which depletes the national land wealth through grants to the railroad companies of 105 miles of land, right and left of the tracks, in perpetuity. The consequences are easy to foresee: the companies monopolize vast tracts of land and inflate land prices, thus preventing an orderly colonization of the region, while at the same time accumulating stupendous fortunes. When the candid professor allowed himself to share his doubts regarding the national advantages of such a policy with his students, the magnate's widow who had endowed the college had a vision; in her dream her late husband appeared before her with a stern and reproachful countenance. She related her vision to the faculty, and a majority of its members actually voted for the dismissal of their daring colleague. Ross' father-in-law, the well-known sociologist Lester Ward, kept me informed about all the details of this outrageous affair. And so, when Leland Stanford University invited me to give a few lectures, I did not reply.

There is little left in the Far West of the gentlemanly tradition common to provincial England and to the states along the Atlantic coast, notably New England. It could hardly be otherwise. On the vast stretches between the Alleghenies and the Cordilleras, the Cordilleras and the Pacific, to the English pioneers, who themselves not always had been the first settlers, have been added so many new ethnographic layers that one wonders at the strength and vitality of the Anglo-American civilization which has been able to mold them into a whole.

There are at present about 15 million Germans in the United States. Some of them are concentrated in Pennsylvania and New York, others have settled all over the immense "Far West"—whose boundaries in the eighteenth century lay right behind the Alleghenies. Towards the end of the century, a few years before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, these boundless land tracts, originally settled by Indians, were to form the Northwest and Southern Territories. Wave after wave of new settlers—Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, Slavs, Italians (who in some places met earlier settlers of Latin origin—French and Spanish)—gradually drove the native Indian population farther and farther back, relegating them finally to the "Indian Reservations"; and one after another new states of the Union crystallized on the vast expanse of the former Territories.

Louisiana, sold to the United States by Napoleon, had been settled by the French and might have become, under favorable circumstances, the nucleus of a flourishing colony with the propitious peculiarity that a new mixed racial strain evolved here through intermarriage—the Creoles. Their native tongue is still French and they tend to keep apart. In some ways they remind us of our own landowners' class which developed on the foundation of peasant serfdom as did the Creoles upon that of plantation slavery.

An American writer whom I met in 1881 on board ship, has vividly described this decaying world. G. W. Cable, at his own admission, had been an attentive reader of Turgenev's *The Sportsman's Sketches*; and we cannot fail to be reminded of that book when we read Cable's stories of the Creole past. They give us not a biased picture like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but a realistic description of a certain way of life with its light and shadows.

Cable is by no means popular in New Orleans, as I had occasion to observe myself. His friend, the French Consul Vicomte d'Abzac, vainly tried to bring him together with prominent Creoles in his house. They stubbornly refused to have anything to do with the writer they regard as their detractor and slanderer.

French influence has almost vanished in St. Louis, a town named by French pioneers after the great king of France. French influence has given way to German. Tens and hundreds of thousands have come to the valley of the Mississippi from the Rhineland, from Hanover and Nassau, Wuerttemberg, and Baden. This valley whose primeval forests once were the exclusive hunting-ground of French "batteurs des bois," trappers and fur-traders, has been gradually settled by farmers and cattle-breeders from all over the world.

Despite the fact, however, that Anglo-Saxons are no longer numerically predominant among the pioneers and vast regions are populated almost exclusively by Germans and Scandinavians—the American way of life bears everywhere the indelible stamp of Anglo-Saxon civilization. And for this reason—despite the tendency of German-Americans to hang together and form all kinds of associations, I discount the possibility of the United States ever becoming a vanguard of Germanism.

Some time ago I read an interesting novel by the gifted German writer Rudolph Hertzog, *Das grosse Heimweh* (*The great Homesickness*). It depicts the yearning for a close spiritual bond which possesses the 15-20 million people of German descent scattered over the North American continent. The story of German immigration, as he relates it, started in 1683, when Franz-Daniel Pastorius brought over his fellow-Mennonites from the Lower Rhine who founded Germantown near Philadelphia. Crowds of Rhinelanders followed in their wake and developed agriculture in Pennsylvania. Others settled in South and North Carolina. In 1734, many Protestants who suffered persecution in Catholic Salzburg came to Georgia and contributed much to the growth of that colony. Thousands of Germans helped the Dutch and later the English to make New York a great and flourishing city. At the end of the eighteenth century, George Washington himself invited Germans to come and help settle Kentucky. The history of Ohio and Indiana is filled with bloody clashes between Germans and Indians. German immigrants joined in the great westward movement, leaving behind them a trail of prosperous towns and neat villages. In the Great Lakes region they populate the giant cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Cleveland. After 1849, new waves of German immigrants reach the Far West, blazing the trail with plough and pickaxe. Today all the Western states have a vast population of German descent.

And yet, when I asked one of the "forty-niners"—those compelled to emigrate from Germany by the failure of the revolution of 1848—whether he had sent his children or was planning to send his grandchildren to a German school, he replied, "Certainly not! I want to make things easier for them, and nothing is likely to help them along more than close contacts from early youth with that Anglo-Saxon element that has given its language, its culture, and institutions to the New World."

It goes without saying that American laws do not prohibit the establishment of German schools, provided these are maintained

by private funds. Yet the more freedom in this field, the weaker the urge to set the children apart, to isolate them in the midst of an English-speaking world. Thus German cultural yearnings are mitigated by well-recognized self-interest, as the author of the above-mentioned novel readily admits.

Of all countries Ireland has provided the highest percentage of immigrants. The exodus from Ireland received an impetus from the unprecedented famine in the middle of last century, caused by the failure of the potato crop. Economic conditions compelled emigration long after the abolition of the cruel anti-Catholic laws imposed by the English since Cromwell as a means to check the growth of Irish separatism. But despite the fact that the Irish succeeded in stirring up a dangerous anti-British movement in the United States—represented by the Fenian Brotherhood which supported rebellion and organized "agrarian crime" in Ireland—the flood of Irish immigrants had little influence on American culture and politics. Their language was English. The most that can be said is that their low standard of education lowered the general percentage of literacy in the country and that they swelled the ranks of destitute citizens who could be induced to sell their votes. The lower ranks of the New York police are being recruited from among the Irish. Some of the Irish, after saving up some money through hard work in the Eastern states, wander away from the coast and disperse all over the country. But many prefer to buy or rent land in the East, especially in those areas where the price of land has been falling as a result of the westward migration.

Of other Roman-Catholic groups the Spanish are probably the most numerous. There was a time when the whole Southwest—Texas, New Mexico, California—belonged to them. I had no opportunity to visit the first two states; but I travelled all over California from north and south, down to the very Mexican border, and I can testify that not once did I have to resort to the Spanish language. All that is left of the comparatively recent Spanish era are the names of many rivers, towns, and settlements in Central and Southern California.

It is not the remnant of the Spanish settlers in California who live a life of their own, apart from the rest of the population, but the representatives of the yellow race—the Chinese, and, in lesser numbers, the Japanese.

Since the adoption of the first measures against Chinese immigration during President Arthur's term, which coincided with my first

visit to America, the Chinese have been living in a compact mass only in a special quarter of San Francisco. In Monterey I found right on the coast, a small Chinese settlement whose inhabitants make a living gathering seaweed, drying it, and sending it to China where the very poor are not too squeamish to use it as food. In San Francisco I spent a whole day visiting the Chinese quarter. I had dinner at a Chinese restaurant which amazed me by its cheapness and its lack of waste; even the bones of a chicken are ground so fine they can be eaten. After dinner my guide took me to a kind of chapel, and then to a rather shabby club where the Chinese indulge their passion for hashish. I admit that what made the strongest impression on me were the tiny lights springing up all along the streets of the Chinese quarter after dark. These are a part of the ancestor cult still dominant in China, one of the most widely spread forms of worship since time immemorial, practised in ancient Rome as well as in Persia and India. The candles lit in Christian churches are a late survival of that same cult.

At the time of my first visit, the press was conducting a systematic campaign against the Chinese. There was hardly a vice they were not accused of. Their morals were allegedly such that no Christian white people could be expected to live side by side with them. Instead of spending their savings in this country, they were taking their money back with them to China. Apparently this last consideration carried the most weight. Americans value the settler who strikes roots in their midst, but not the transient lodger who takes his savings out of the country.

Twenty years later, the campaign against the Asiatics was resumed with a new target, the Japanese. It started with the decision of the San Francisco City Council to ban Japanese children from municipal schools, in particular those with co-education. The Japanese appealed to the President who could do nothing to help them since he has no power over municipal authorities. The case went to the Federal courts. I do not remember the outcome. It seems that the powerful support of the Mikado's government prevented the wholesale expulsion of Asiatics, demanded not only by American journalists but also by the working class. The workers pointed out that the living standard of the Asiatics was much inferior to their own and allowed them to be satisfied with very low wages, which made them dangerous competitors of white labor. It was the cheapness of yellow labor that had made it possible to build the Southern transcontinental railroad on terms highly profitable to the stock-

holders. While that undertaking was still under way, no one thought of molesting the Chinese and Japanese. But when the railway was completed, the politicians suddenly began taking to heart the resentment of white labor, and the moralists were ready with plausible arguments in support of the expulsion of Asiatics.

Arguments of a similar nature, reasonable enough on the face of it, are being used to justify recent restrictions on white immigrants. These are now required to furnish proof that they would not become public charges. Upon landing, newcomers are asked how much money they have brought with them. It is the Jews coming from Russia who are hardest hit by the new restrictive policy. Nevertheless, their numbers increase rapidly. In every Federal, municipal, university library I visited, I met Russian Jews in charge of the preparation of catalogues.

In Chicago I once had a pleasant surprise; I received a shipment of several dozen well-bound volumes containing a summary of the statistical material provided by the recent census. It was a gift to me from one of my former students at the University of Moscow, a Jew who had emigrated to America. He had found a job on a census committee, and now, with the consent of his superiors, was paying me his respects in this way. The Smithsonian Institution as well as various ethnographical museums know how to put to good use the knowledge of those Russian Jews who—not of their own free choice—had had occasion to spend some years in little-explored regions of Siberia. The well-known Russian writer Tan (pen-name of Bogoraz), a Jew who for a time had been exiled to Kamchatka where he had collected rich material about the native tribe of Chuktchi, was invited by the Smithsonian, if I am not mistaken, to publish the results of his research in America, which he did for a number of years with excellent financial results.

Americans seem to take a particular interest in that part of Siberia which adjoins the Pacific, presumably from purely materialistic motives. Upon my arrival at San Francisco, I had hardly time to unpack at the Grand Hotel, when I was confronted with three interviewers from the three leading local papers, all with the same question: Might it not be in the interest of American commerce to establish a regular steamship line across the Bering Strait and to have it connected by rail with the great Trans-Siberian railroad? I ventured to express some doubts which were given a quite unexpected interpretation in next day's papers. I was accused of insincerity. It was surely out of Russian patriotism and the un-

willingness to share Russian national wealth with foreigners that I was pretending to put in doubt the unquestionable profits that would pour into American pockets with the establishment of such a passage.

Of Russian Jews, it is, of course, only the élite that achieve positions as librarians, lawyers, bank clerks, etc. The great mass earn a scant livelihood in a great variety of trades. Nevertheless, in big cities, such as Chicago, one meets quite a number of well-to-do smartly dressed Jews. Once I was asked to attend a play at the Yiddish theatre there, given by a traveling company that had come all the way from Kiev. The house was filled to overflowing with a richly dressed audience, the men in evening clothes. And yet this theatre is located in one of the worst slums of Chicago, where many of the poorest Jewish families are housed. Some are so poor they cannot keep their children at home and have to place them in a kind of community shelter run by a Miss Addams, one of the nicest women engaged in social work I have met during my journey. She asked me once to have supper with her at the community table in company with her numerous charges. I recognized there many types familiar to me from Brest-Litovsk, Berdichev, and Lemberg.

The Slavic world has sent not only its Jews to America. Ever since the War of Independence there have been Poles among the pioneers of the New World. One finds Polish names among the collaborators of George Washington as well as among the administrators of the North-West Territory. The number of Czechs has lately increased. Some Czechs and Poles are members of the Chicago City Council. My kindly host invited them to his house to meet me. I learned from the guests on that occasion that their feelings had been hurt by the decision of the Chicago University to begin the teaching of Slavic languages, literatures and history with Russia; the Poles thought their own country had a better claim to priority. It turned out that the party given in my honor contained quite a number of people antagonistic to me, although not on personal grounds.

Ruthenians are numerous in Chicago. I attended one of their crowded annual garden parties. The guests belonged mostly to the working class. The Ruthenian language turned out to be so different from the Ukrainian used by the poet Shevchenko that I found it difficult to converse with them. To my rescue came two Russians who had helped in the migration of the Dukhobors from Russia to Canada. They told me much that was interesting about the Dukho-

bors—how painful had been their first encounter with a strange world and how well they had adjusted themselves in the course of time. Today they are prosperous farmers.

There are quite a number of Lithuanian workers in Chicago. On Sundays they used to attend the Catholic Church where the services are conducted by a distant relative of Mickiewicz. Together with my host I was invited to lunch by this priest. I easily recognized the great Polish poet in the portrait above the sofa. A few members of the Lithuanian colony were present, and during lunch I heard much about the hardships encountered by Lithuanian immigrants in their first months in Chicago. As a result of their ignorance of English, they usually start as factory workers at low wages.

One meets Italians all over the country. Many of them make a living as fruit peddlers. They are one of the poorest immigrant groups. Poverty has driven them from their homes. Most of them are natives of Southern Italy and Sicily where the system of large landed estates has prevented the formation of a prosperous peasantry.

Another country which year after year sends the surplus of its population to the United States, is Hungary.

If to all these we add the Finns, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes who settle generally in the woodlands of the Northern states where they carry on the trades they pursued in their old countries, the list of nationalities that have found a haven in hospitable America is still hardly complete.

Today the immigration from Germany is dwindling while that from the Scandinavian countries and Finland, from Lithuania, Galicia, and, to my surprise, also Russia, is steadily growing. I learned from young Harper, the son of the President of Chicago University during my term there, that in the course of the last year alone there had come no less than 70-80,000 immigrants from Russia, among them a number of Ukrainian peasants. The shortage of land that affects our rural population, especially where communal property has disappeared, as in the Ukraine, compels the peasants not only to seek seasonal work in the cities or to migrate to Siberia, but even to look for a livelihood abroad. Hence the mass movement of land laborers to Prussia, which allowed the German government—if one is to believe the papers—to detain whole regiments in the beginning of the war. Hence also the emigration of tens of thousands overseas. Not all of them, to be sure, leave their country forever; a great many sooner or later go back with their savings.

When I served on a Committee of the Imperial Council in Russia, the representative of the province of Vilna reported to us that emigrants from that region used to send money home to their relatives for the purchase of land; and this newly acquired land, together with the old allotments, was owned as indivisible family property. So it was at least before Stolypin's reforms dealt a heavy blow to this survival of the past which, properly protected, might have played the same part in preserving the land in the hands of its tillers as that performed by the American legislation with regard to the inalienable homestead.

As to the Italian peasants compelled to leave their country, they are migrating today chiefly to North Africa—Tunis, and lately also Tripolitania and Lybia, since these have become Italian colonies—and to South America. Some of them, however, still go to the United States, although this movement is seriously hampered by the law prohibiting the admission of paupers. Not all of those admitted stay in this country; some move on to Canada, lured by the rich soil of Manitoba, which has become one of the granaries of the world, and by the prosperity of the provinces along the Pacific coast.

A list of the racial strains that have gone into the making of the American nation will hardly include the Negroes and Indians. Inter-marriages between white and colored are the rare exception. While the Constitution proclaims that "all men are created equal," hostility in the South and aloofness in the North characterize the relationship between whites and Negroes. The bulk of the black population is massed around the Gulf of Mexico. The Negroes withstand the hot damp climate of that region better than the whites and are less subject to the malignant fever that has killed so many newcomers from the North. At one time this conglomeration of Negroes in one place suggested the plan of creating there something like the Russian "pale of settlement" for Jews. Fortunately for the country, this idea has been abandoned. There are many Negroes today in the Pacific states; in Oregon more than in California. As servants in hotels and restaurants, they are common all over the country.

The Indians are even less absorbed into the white population than the Negroes. I have met mestizos from South America in the United States, but never native-born mestizos. In many parts of the country the attempt has been made to transform the Indians from nomads and hunters into settled farmers. A few miles from Niag-

ara Falls I visited such a settlement, to see for myself how far the metamorphosis of semi-savages into civilized citizens has been successful. I was welcomed in some Indian homes. I also stopped at the school for boys and girls. The teacher told me that in her domain things weren't going all too well, mainly because Indian families rarely stayed very long on their homesteads; they preferred to take to the woods, neglecting their farms.

In Dakota I met Indians still faithful to their past, natives of the Indian territory. This territory has been grievously reduced in size through the grants to railroad companies of vast tracts of land originally reserved for the Indians—not only as an area of settlement, but also to provide them with hunting-grounds, pastures, and space to roam.

Yet nowhere did I encounter Indians in such great numbers as at the Pan-American Exhibition in Buffalo. The Indian camp was its main attraction. They put on a big show every day, mostly equestrian feats. The tribal chiefs would ride their horses wearing their picturesque headdress made of feathers, sometimes those of birds of paradise. These birds have now migrated to the hats of fashionable women in Europe. The Buffalo Exposition probably has had something to do with the spread of that fashion.

(To be Continued)

Dostoevsky Under the Soviets

BY MARC SLONIM

I

IN his recent travel notes,¹ the popular Soviet poet A. Tvardovsky tells about a Norwegian farmer who asked the Russian visitor: "Why is Dostoevsky banned in your country?"

"This," writes Tvardovsky, "is one of those whoppers which are so widely spread abroad, and the blunt question of the Norwegian lover of Russian literature was based on such a whopper. I had to explain that this was entirely incorrect, that after the Revolution we published Dostoevsky's works in infinitely greater numbers of copies than ever before, that we have an incomputably rich literary heritage, but that this does not prevent us, as its possessors, from a critical approach to the opinions of our great writers."

These statements sum up the official attitude toward Dostoevsky prevailing today in the Soviet Union. It may be said that this attitude is fundamentally ambivalent, but it would be erroneous to assume that it has been formed only during the last three decades. As a matter of fact it follows a long pre-Revolutionary tradition. Radical and socialist intellectuals and critics never ceased quarrelling with Dostoevsky. They did not deny his artistic genius, yet they could not accept his political and religious views, and this contradiction led to all sorts of conflicts and discussions. When the *Notes of the Fatherland* began the publication of *A Raw Youth* in January, 1875, the editors deemed it necessary to explain the startling appearance of the author of *The Possessed* in the radical monthly. Mikhailovsky justified the paradoxical situation as follows in his article before the opening chapters of the novel: "Dostoevsky is one of our most talented novelists; our monthly is impelled to publish works of fiction primarily on the ground of their authors' talent; *A Raw Youth* is unlike *The Possessed*, in which Dostoevsky revealed his strange and melancholy obsession for utilizing current political cases as the themes for his novels." Had he done so again in this new work, *The Notes of the Fatherland* "would have been compelled to renounce the honor of including Dostoevsky, despite his genius."

¹*Novyi Mir*, 1950, vol. 9.

Mikhailovsky could not be more explicit because of the censorship, but the readers were used to the Aesopic language: they knew perfectly well that the organ of Mikhailovsky, Nekrasov, and Saltykov-Shchedrin defended those very principles of socialism, revolution, and Populism which Dostoevsky attacked in his works.

After Dostoevsky's death the situation merely worsened: Dostoevsky was hailed as the proponent of Orthodoxy and Autocracy by the conservatives and reactionaries. Some critics at the beginning of the twentieth century attempted to prove that he had been the prophet of the revolution, but this view seemed extremely debatable. Much more common was the opinion expressed by Gorky, who affirmed that Dostoevsky's ideology was completely opposed to that of the democratic and socialistic intelligentsia. When the Moscow Art Theatre staged *The Possessed* in 1913, Gorky protested against what he considered "playing the hand of governmental reaction." Some critics reminded him that Dostoevsky was, after all, one of Russia's greatest writers, and Gorky's revealing reply has a curious ring of actuality: "This is the opinion of the literati, as I understand them: although Dostoevsky is a reactionary, and one of the founders of the zoological nationalism which is strangling us today, although he denigrated Granovsky and Belinsky and is an enemy of that very West by whose works and ideas we live, although he is a rabid chauvinist, an anti-Semite, a preacher of submission and patience—despite all this his artistic genius is so great that it outweighs all his sins against the concepts of justice which the best leaders of mankind have tried to work out. And, therefore, society has no right to protest against Dostoevsky's tendencies and, in general, against any artist, whatever his preaching may be." But Gorky warned that such an attitude was equivocal and hypocritical, and refused to divorce an artist's faith from his art: he felt that Dostoevsky's *Weltanschauung* as expressed in his works was obnoxious, dangerous, and unwholesome. He, therefore, recommended opposing Dostoevsky as one of the foes of the progressive movement. It is to be noted that Gorky never changed this opinion, and repeated it some twenty years later, under the Soviets.

Most Communist critics after 1917 adopted the same line; they emphasized that Dostoevsky's ideology was hostile to Communism. Had he been a minor writer, it would have been easy to dismiss him and let oblivion take care of his name and works. But the fact that he is one of Russia's greatest figures, a part of the cultural heritage

the Soviets wanted to accept and to integrate with the present, determined the constant ambivalence which the problem was confronted with and dealt with. There were, of course, fluctuations and deviations corresponding to the general evolution of Soviet society and of the Party line. In the 1920's, when controls were rather loose, nothing was done to prevent active scholarly research and the reprinting of Dostoevsky's works, and the emphasis was rather on the first part of the formula. "Dostoevsky is a great artist," while the second part, "his ideology is reactionary and therefore hostile to the Soviets," was not stressed. After World War II, with the tightening of ideological controls under Zhdanov, the situation became reversed, and the second part of the formula came more to the fore.

In general, one has the impression that the Communist leaders adopted a sort of working compromise in regard to Dostoevsky. They allowed the reprinting of his works but did so reluctantly; they left considerable latitude to scholars and literary critics in the exploration of Dostoevsky's life and work, although they occasionally did so with ill grace, and they made careful selections of those of Dostoevsky's novels which were destined for wide circulation among the masses.

Two examples will suffice in illustration. Text books on Russian literature for the upper grades of secondary schools are extremely cautious about Dostoevsky. *The History of Russian Literature* by A. Zerchaninov, D. Raikhin, and V. Strazhev, approved as a standard text book by the Commissariat of Education in 1940 and still in use (it has had several large printings, the first one of 400,000 copies, and the last one in 1949 of 500,000 copies), devoted a page and a half in small type to Dostoevsky (a sort of extended footnote), which ends with the statement: "He has acquired universal recognition as a masterful genius of the psychological novel." (This sentence has been omitted in the 1949 edition.) The student is bound to wonder why such a genius is mentioned only incidentally and in small type. So far I have not seen a single text book for secondary schools which devotes a special chapter to Dostoevsky or gives excerpts from his works.

The second example is the policy of Soviet publishing houses in regard to Dostoevsky's works. Until the coming of the Soviet, there was no definitive, complete collection of Dostoevsky's works; the thirteen-volume collection published by Gosizdat (the State Publishing House) in 1926-1930, and edited by such excellent scholars

as B. Tomashevsky and K. Khalabaiev, is far superior to all previous editions. It establishes a definitive and carefully revised text with comments, variants, and so on. Yet while we must acknowledge this highly valuable achievement and credit it to Soviet literary institutions, we cannot help noticing the relatively small amount of copies printed by comparison with the exceedingly large printings of other classics. The volumes containing the novels were published in an edition of 10,000 copies, while volume thirteen (containing the articles) was limited to 4,000 copies, and volumes eleven and twelve (*The Diary of a Writer*) were limited to 5,000. Dostoevsky's novels were, however, reprinted in 1931 in a ten volume edition, but again in a printing of 10,000 copies. As a result of this only a limited number of persons can afford owning the collected works of Dostoevsky. The same holds true of public libraries in the provinces; a great many factory libraries (such as the Stalingrad Tractor Plant) do not list Dostoevsky's works in their catalogues, and it is difficult to ascertain whether such facts are due to a deliberate policy or to the material impossibility of obtaining rare books.²

Individual works of Dostoevsky were published in the 1920's, 1930's, and in the last decade, generally in good, well-illustrated editions. *The Gambler*, *The Humiliated and the Wronged*, *Notes From the House of the Dead*, *Polzukhov*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Possessed* and *The Brothers Karamazov* were brought out by the *Academia* in editions of 5,000 and 10,000. In 1946, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Dostoevsky's birth, a popular edition of *Poor Folk* was brought out in a mass printing of 500,000 copies. In 1947 the Gosizdat published the *Selected Work*, an omnibus which contained *Poor Folk*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Village of Stepanchikovo*, *White Nights*, *The Dream of a Funny Man*, *The Meek Woman*, *Muzhik Marey*; the first printing of this excellent edition consisted of 110,000 copies. I believe that it would be fair to state that only four works of Dostoevsky—*Poor Folk*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Notes From the House of the Dead*, and *The Humiliated*

²It must be pointed out, however, that the posthumous edition of Dostoevsky's works by his widow (1883) and the Panteleev edition (1892) did not reach ten thousand copies each; the first large printing was made by Marx in 1894, when the collected works of Dostoevsky were distributed as a premium to the popular weekly *Niva*; the *Prosveshchenie* edition, in twenty-three small volumes (1911-1918), did not reach a large audience. Some statistical data (unchecked) put the pre-Revolutionary circulation of Dostoevsky (outside of the *Niva* edition) at 75,000 copies in all (1887-1917).

and the *Wronged* have reached a circulation in the Soviet Union on a scale comparable to the works of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, or Chekhov. Apparently, Soviet authorities do not think that such novels as *The Brothers Karamazov* or *The Possessed* should be made available to the masses. It is obvious that readers desirous of getting acquainted with these works have to hunt second-hand bookstores or resort to public libraries.

II

The Russian reader may have some difficulty in acquiring the collected works of Dostoevsky or *The Brothers Karamazov* or *A Raw Youth*, but he will certainly be rewarded by extensive literature concerning the author. There is no doubt that most valuable and important material in this field has been brought to light in the Soviet Union during the last thirty years, and its quality is matched by its quantity. (The bibliographical survey in the 1926-1930 edition of Dostoevsky's collected works lists more than 100 critical publications between 1923 and 1929 alone.)

Literary and historical research was particularly intense and fruitful during the first decade of the Soviet régime (1920-1930). The leading place belongs undoubtedly to Dostoevsky's notebooks (edited by E. Konshina, *Academia*, 1935) and to his manuscripts, which include variants, drafts, or unpublished chapters such as Stavroghin's confession (published in 1921 and 1922 by several publishing houses, in the provinces as well as in Moscow and Leningrad). The manuscripts of *Crime and Punishment* (published by N. Glivenko in 1931), of *The Idiot*, *The Possessed* (published by L. Sakulin) are of the highest importance, and no work on Dostoevsky can be done today without these first-rate documents. The manuscripts of *The Brothers Karamazov* were also published by the Russian scholar V. Komarovich in German (Piper Verlag, Munich, 1928). The archives of Dostoevsky, which possess a wealth of documents, provided materials for numerous publications, such as N. Belchikov's *Variants and Drafts of Netochka Nezvanova* (in the *Press and the Revolution*, 1928, vol. 2), *The Crocodile* (*idem*, vol. 5), *Hobgoblin* (*The Star*, 1930, vol. 6), *The Diary of a Writer* (*Literature and Marxism*, 1928, vol. 1), P. Avanesov's *The Craftsmanship of the Double* (1927), and many others. Various contributions to the study of Dostoevsky have been published in Soviet periodicals, in collections of essays and materials brought out by the Literary Section of the State Academy of Arts and Science (volume 3, Moscow,

1928), the Institute of Russian Literature (Academy of Science, Moscow, 1935), *The Literary Heritage* (volume 15, 1934) and the *St. Petersburg Feuilletons*, edited by Y. Oxman (*Academia*, 1930).

A particularly valuable corpus is formed by letters and memoirs. Two large volumes of Dostoevsky's letters published by Gosizdat (1928-1934), and one by *Academia* (1934), under the editorship of A. S. Dolinin (Iskoz) present the first authoritative and definitive codification of the writer's correspondence, of which only abridged and scattered fragments had been previously published by N. Strakhov, O. Miller, and others in various pre-revolutionary periodicals. The fourth volume, however, promised for 1935, failed to appear, for reasons unknown to the present writer. It must be pointed out that similar interruptions in the publication of a series of volumes are frequent. The most glaring instance, perhaps, is that of A. Borodin's letters, where there was an interval of fifteen years between the appearance of the first volume and the second.

The lack of the fourth volume is but partly compensated by a few selections, such as *The Letters of Dostoevsky to His Wife* (Gosizdat, 1926), *Dostoevsky's Correspondence with Turgenev* (edited by N. Belchikov, *Academia*, 1928), *From Dostoevsky Archives*, edited by N. Piksarov (Gosizdat, 1923; also Central Archives, 1931). Among various recollections the most important are the *Diary* and *Memoirs* of Dostoevsky's wife, Anna (Gosizdat, 1925), who died in Crimea in 1918, and of his brother Andrey (Leningrad, 1930). The recollections of his daughter Liubov, originally published in Germany in 1920, have been translated from the German into Russian twice, with critical comments. In 1924, A. Dolinin edited the memoirs of Appollinaria Suslova, which throw so much new light on the years of her intimacy with Dostoevsky. Some interesting documents on Dostoevsky's life in Semipalatinsk were published by the monthly *Siberian Lights* (1924, vol. 6 and 8).

It must also be noted that there are two Dostoevsky Museums in the Soviet Union. The first, in the Lenin Library in Moscow, possesses a valuable collection of autographs, manuscripts, first editions, iconography, etc.; the second, founded in 1927, is located in the quarters the Dostoevsky family occupied in Moscow's Mariinsky Hospital, where the writer's father was a resident physician.

III

The vast literature on Dostoevsky includes numerous essays and critical interpretations of his personality and work. The greater

number of the contributions were published in the 1920's, when most of the new documents came to light.

Old critics and scholars, such as L. Grossman, A. Dolinin, N. Piskunov joined hands with such younger ones as B. Tomashevsky, E. Konchina, V. Ignatova, and many others. Their labor and efforts have indubitably helped maintain the study of Dostoevsky on a high level of scholarship and literary honesty. It must be pointed out that the leading figures in the field were more or less connected with the so-called "formal school" of literary research and criticism, and this fact colored most of the books on Dostoevsky between 1920 and 1930. Grossman's monographs—*Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1925 and 1933), *Dostoevsky's Path* (1924 and 1928), *The Life and Works of Dostoevsky* (1935), and Dolinin's general surveys, such as *Dostoevsky* (1925), as well as several volumes of his research and essays (cf. the 1935 edition), were mainly concerned with the factual and purely literary problems.

The analytical work of various other writers extends from Dostoevsky's family tree (V. Volotzkoy, *The Genealogy of Dostoevsky*, Moscow, 1933) to minute collation of drafts, manuscripts, and published texts (viz. V. Komarovich's *Dostoevsky, Historical and Literary Research*, Leningrad, 1925).

It is not the aim of this article to give a survey of all these works. The mere bibliography on Dostoevsky in the Soviet Union runs to several hundred titles. Only a part of these publications, however, reflects the Marxist or straight Communist interpretation of Dostoevsky. We will quote a few to show the changing pattern of the official attitude toward the great writer.

At the beginning of the Bolshevik régime there were several attempts to accept Dostoevsky on the ground of his "rebellious spirit," thus making him appear a precursor and prophet, rather than enemy, of the Revolution. This tendency was already obvious in the speech of Vladimírsky, representing the Moscow Soviet at the unveiling of the monument to Dostoevsky on the Tsvetnoy Boulevard in Moscow, in November, 1918, at which the main address was delivered by Vyacheslav Ivanov. In 1921, A. Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Education at the time, laid the emphasis in his article in *Krasnaya Nov'* (vol. 4, 1921) on Dostoevsky's rebellion against mediocrity, his criticism of bourgeois society, and his sympathy with the sufferings of the common man. He was foreseeing and announcing a revolutionary change, and this seemed sufficient to justify the interest in the writer under the Soviets.

Lunacharsky, whose opinion coincided with the standard evaluations of the older Marxist critics, made another point in Dostoevsky's favor. The author of *Crime and Punishment* represented the end of aristocratic literature; his descriptions of slums and his portraits of democratic intellectuals marked a turning point toward urban art.

A quite similar position was taken by V. Pereverzev, who was quite influential in the late 1920's. His first books on Dostoevsky were published in 1912 and reprinted with various modifications in 1924 and 1928 (*Dostoevsky* and *Dostoevsky's Work*). What made Pereverzev's viewpoint challenging and provoked a heated controversy was his refusal to tag Dostoevsky as a reactionary; he stressed that Dostoevsky had always been attracted by rebellion, that all his heroes rebel against God and society, and that his own struggle against this tendency had hardly been successful. Although Pereverzev analyzed Dostoevsky's novels and their protagonists from the point of view of class struggle and as reflections of a changing social and economic scene, the critic's books were made the target of sharp attack by more intransigent Marxists. An example of the anti-Pereverzev line is supplied by S. Shchukin in the chapter "Dostoevsky, Pereverzev and the Revolution" of his book, *The Two Criticisms* (Moscow Workman, 1930). Shchukin contends that Pereverzev is too lenient with Dostoevsky, and in order to prove the dangerously reactionary substance of Dostoevsky's general outlook a comparison is given between excerpts from the *Diary of a Writer* and *Milestones*, the collection of essays by various authors, published in 1919 and interpreted by radical and Socialist critics as an expression of an anti-Revolutionary bourgeois spirit.

The two trends—the acceptance of Dostoevsky as a man who merely seemed reactionary but was fundamentally a rebel, and the rejection of Dostoevsky as an exponent of a mystico-reactionary attitude—continued throughout the whole period of the New Economic Policy. One might be inclined to say that the first tendency was rather prevalent, although the traditional ambivalence had never been overcome completely. Various critical interpretations, such as Pereverzev's and Lunacharsky's, were mostly concerned with escaping this ambivalence. In the early 1920's even such critics as B. Gorbachev, the future supporter of the intransigent proletarian line, affirmed that Dostoevsky's ideas were not dangerous, since he condemned capitalism and its political expression, which is bourgeois democracy; the greater writer rejected a revolution divorced from the people and in Raskolnikov, exposed

the futility of bourgeois individualism; he also criticized Russian aristocracy and evinced his reluctance to accept a social order the end products of which were paupers, unhappy children, and prostitutes ("The Social Roots of Dostoevsky's Preachment," in *The Class Struggle*, 1924, vol. 1-2).

Pereverzev, following in the steps of Dobrolubov, called young Dostoevsky "the painter of the crushed men of the middle class," and applied this definition to all the works of the writer. This contention was opposed by those who regarded Dostoevsky's heroes as "noblemen of high culture who had forsaken their own class yet feared and despised the men of the day to come, the bourgeois with their sense of proportion and quantity." This analysis of the class nature of Devushkin, Raskolnikov, old Karamazov and others, was cited as an explanation of Dostoevsky's anti-capitalistic and anti-bourgeois trends (cf. M. Poliakova's "The Social Background of Dostoevsky's Heroes," in *Novyi Mir*, 1924, vol. 4).

At the same time that this controversy was going on, L. Grossman and V. Polonsky were arguing whether Stavroghin had been modeled on Bakunin (articles in *The Press and The Revolution*, 1923, 1924, vol. 4 and 5; 1925, vol. 2).

IV

There were no major polemics on Dostoevsky in the 1930's, and publications concerning his work diminished by comparison with the previous decade, although there was a certain upswing about 1935. During the war with Germany in 1941-45 various quotations from Dostoevsky were given currency in the press in order to prove his patriotic and anti-Teutonic feelings (particularly the famous scene in *The Possessed*, where *Mein Lieber Augustin* is played simultaneously with the *Marseillaise*, finally drowning out the latter). But after the war, however, the controversy was resumed by the Marxist critics.

The 125th anniversary of the writer's birth was the occasion for the publication of his works in large printings (as mentioned above) and for official celebrations by various institutions such as the Dostoevsky Museum, the State Literary Museum, Gorky's Institute of World Literature, the Academy of Science. The keynote was given by V. Kirpotin, who spoke at the meeting called by the Academy. He pointed out "the great mastery with which Dostoevsky depicted the sufferings of the masses of the people under capitalist society." Dostoevsky "did not understand the very reason

of this unbearable plight of mankind, and did not know how to combat it, but his books sounded like a tocsin, as a warning and a call for help." Alexandrov published an article in the issue of the popular weekly *Ogonek* devoted to the tenth anniversary of Stalin's constitution, in which the Communist critic hailed Dostoevsky as one of the greatest writers not only of Russia but of the world. Even more significant was an essay by D. Zaslavsky, who had often served as the mouthpiece of Soviet leading circles. Zaslavsky stressed the contradictions in Dostoevsky's work and personality. These contradictions and the novelist's inner conflicts made it impossible to place him in any definite political camp. He was neither a revolutionary, a democrat, nor a conservative. His main merit lay in formulating questions, great and important questions concerning the social order, the limitations of the individual, and Russia's mission in promoting the unity of mankind. Unfortunately, most of his answers were wrong and inspired by a reactionary ideology. The problems which had tormented him were now "solved by the great Socialist Revolution." The enemies of the Soviets "still seized upon Dostoevsky's answers, which are the weakest part of his work," and "used them in their attacks against the Communists"; but the Russian reader was moved by "the strongest aspect of Dostoevsky's novels, the various questions he so forcefully raised" (*The Literary Gazette*, 1946, No. 46).

V. Kirpotin substantiated this thesis of Dostoevsky's duality in his rather sketchy characterization (*Dostoevsky*, published by *The Soviet Writer*, 1946, p. 79). He defined Dostoevsky's novels as "books by a genius who was no prophet, no teacher of life, no interpreter of 'the Russian soul,' as he had so often been called." He must be perceived within the larger social framework of his times, since his psychology has deep social roots. In the 1850's and early 1860's he had undergone an inner crisis which had led to his lack of faith in man's goodness and man's creative mind. In the 1840's Dostoevsky had associated with revolutionary democrats and had been one of the "progressive writers." At that time he had belonged to the school of critical realism and to the humanistic trend of the Russian intelligentsia, and this is the leitmotif of Kirpotin's four hundred pages of *The Young Dostoevsky* (Gosizdat, 1947; parts of the book were published in 1946 in various Moscow periodicals).

A. Dolinin went even further. In his last book, *In the Creative Laboratory of Dostoevsky* (*The Soviet Writer*, 1947), he affirms that Dostoevsky could never completely get rid of the radicalism of his

youth. By analyzing the notes, drafts, and variants of *A Raw Youth*, Dolinin came to the conclusion that Dostoevsky was in this novel turning again to the liberal and humanitarian ideas he had rejected in *The Possessed*. The aim of Dolinin's book is "to show, at least in the main, all the complexity of Dostoevsky's method, all the contradictions of his ideology, which included, on the one hand, aspirations toward the future, toward a society which would make man happy and perfect, and, on the other, a reactionary and sneering attitude toward revolutionaries, and this despite the fact that they were the only ones who could realize his ideal. We, who are imbued with Soviet ideology, we surely reject, most categorically, the system of Dostoevsky's philosophical and social-political opinions. In this novel [*A Raw Youth*], as in all his works of the second period, he remains the foe of revolutionary methods in the struggle for the better future of mankind." Yet, despite this statement Dolinin tried to prove that the underlying idea of *A Raw Youth* was the problem of changing the world on the basis of social truth and justice.

The first reactions to the books of Kirpotin and Dolinin were favorable. The reviews praised both authors. Uralov, in his article "The Truth About Dostoevsky" (*The Literary Gazette*, 1947, No. 58), hailed Kirpotin for having applied the "Marxist-Leninist method" of literary criticism and incidentally railed at Berdyaev, who "had falsified Dostoevsky's views and represented him as an enemy of humanity." But the publication of Uralov's article was, apparently, a mistake. The reviewer had not realized that times had changed and that the tightening of all intellectual and artistic controls promoted by Zhdanov did not allow any deviations from the official line. Two months after Uralov's indictment of Kirpotin, authoritative articles in *Culture and Life* (the organ of the propaganda section of the Party's Central Committee) and in *The Literary Gazette* (the organ of the Soviet Writers' Union) laid down the foundations for the "authentic Communist approach" to Dostoevsky.

V. Ermilov's article, "Dostoevsky and Our Criticism" (*The Literary Gazette*, 1947, No. 66), began with the blunt statement that "Today, as during his lifetime, Dostoevsky stands in the vanguard of reaction. His works have been fully and extensively exploited in the ferocious campaign against mankind initiated by the literary lackeys of Wall Street. This is quite understandable, inasmuch as Dostoevsky used all the might of his talent to prove the insignifi-

cance, impotence, and baseness of human nature." Dostoevsky had no faith in the human mind and will; his psychology was an attempt to show that man is basically evil, and this had no connection with the realistic method or with the social interpretations of characters and life-situations which we find in Gogol, Goncharov, and other Russian classics. Certain critics, such as Kirpotin or Dolinin (Ermilov stated), are trying desperately to represent Dostoevsky as a realist and humanitarian, but such attempts were to be condemned as grave literary and political errors. Whoever mentioned Dostoevsky's anti-capitalist tendencies ought to be aware that they were nothing more than the reflection of the fears felt by the patriarchal, backward and reactionary middle class before the triumphant rise of capitalism in Russia. Dostoevsky had been frightened as well by the spectre of proletarian revolution. Thus he hated them both, the imminent revolution of the masses, as well as the capitalism which was its cause. "Severe and merciless criticism of everything erroneous and traditionally 'liberal' in the evaluation of Dostoevsky is the concrete task of our science of letters." These concluding words of Ermilov's article sound like an ominous warning, which was part of the campaign against the "cosmopolites" and "formalists." It imposed upon the critics the official line to be taken in regard to Dostoevsky—"the writer of the counter-revolution, whose works are serving world reaction."³

Ermilov's formulation of the official pattern was at the same time a denunciation of those unhappy critics who had published a different interpretation of Dostoevsky just before the Party line in this field had been promulgated. They were, by this very fact, guilty of heresy and liable to punishment unless they made public recantation of their errors.

Ermilov's article had appeared in November, 1947. Four months later, on April 1, 1948, the Academic Council of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Leningrad met to discuss the case of A. Vesselovsky, whose method had been declared "cosmopolitan and idealistic" by leading Communist journalists. Among the sundry scholars who delivered speeches and confessed their errors was Professor Dolinin, who said: "I must confess, I was wrong about Dostoevsky's work, and that I spoke too mildly about his reactionary ideology." He accepted all the criticisms aimed at his book on

³Ermilov subsequently expanded the same ideas in his pamphlet "Against Dostoevsky's Reactionary Ideas," Moscow, 1948.

The Brothers Karamazov, and hoped that his last book (dealing with *A Raw Youth*) would be better, but "an old malady cannot be eradicated overnight. That book is also not without faults. The consciousness of one's errors creates many obligations." Other speakers, who were in the privileged position of righteous exponents of the Party line reproached Dolinin for "the apolitical objectivism of his book, which idealized and adorned the reactionary aspects of Dostoevsky's work. The book (on *A Raw Youth*) is filled with odds-and-ends of bourgeois liberalism, formalism, and an academic apathy."

This episode sums up the situation as it appears today. A formula has been promulgated and a slogan proclaimed by the Communist critics. Every critic has to fall into line, unless he is ready to risk his reputation, his academic position, and the possibility of publishing his work. With the uniformity which is so characteristic of modern means of propaganda, this formula is repeated in almost identical terms by whoever speaks about Dostoevsky, be it Alexander Fadeyev, the Secretary General of the Soviet Writers' Union, who cites it in his numerous speeches, or a literary historian like S. Borshchevsky, who points out in his treatise on Saltykov and Dostoevsky that "The anti-Revolutionary and anti-social views of the creator of *The Possessed* serve the deadly foes of democracy throughout the world" (*Novyi Mir*, 1948, No. 4).

It is difficult to predict whether this highly unfavorable situation, which certainly excludes any independent and original research, will last for a long time or will undergo some changes. The matter depends, obviously, on the general evolution of Soviet literary policy. In any case, by comparison with the recent tightening of state controls and the increase of Party pressures in all domains of Soviet culture, the times preceding World War II, with their official and benevolent ambivalence in regard to Dostoevsky, appear today as an era of relative freedom and liberalism.

The American Villain on the Soviet Stage*

BY ANDREW M. HANFMAN

THE AMERICAN as a villain first appeared on the Soviet stage in the theatrical season 1946-1947. Previously, the American could be seen only sporadically and in minor rôles. He was either a helpless, comic figure, as the bespectacled, childish, and naive lost soldier in Vsevolod Ivanov's "Armored Train 14-69," whose face would light up with sympathy and understanding at the name of Lenin. Or he was an equally naive but conscientious war correspondent, as in Gladkov's and Arbuzov's "The Immortal," whose thirst for sensationalism and detached curiosity would give way to genuine interest and participation in Soviet life under the impact of war experience at the Soviet front. In the comedy "Mr. Perkins Goes to Moscow," a mildly satirical touch was added to the figures of the American business man and his secretary, who arrive in Moscow full of suspicion and mistrust, look under each hotel bed for hidden microphones, and finally discover that one can do business with Moscow.

Underlying all these American figures were some real prototypes, slightly adjusted to the specific functions of the guided Soviet theatre, but still sufficiently realistic to reveal the reference to living human beings. In Alexei Popov's production of "The Immortal" in the Red Army Central Theatre, Jack Warner, the American war correspondent, was played by Khokhlov as an attractive, open-minded, and observant young man, a typical American reporter in search of a good story.

The turning point from this harmless American to a sinister villain was marked by K. Simonov's play, "The Russian Question." The plot of this play is widely known, and the figure of the American reporter, Harry Smith, who is commissioned, against his sincere beliefs, to write an anti-Soviet book for a Wall Street-dominated publisher, whose shady activities in politics necessitate an outburst of anti-Soviet feelings in America, has been brought to the attention

*This article is based on the author's paper read at the Foreign Language Conference, University of Kentucky, May 11-13, 1950 [Ed.].

of American readers not only through numerous newspaper reports, but also in *The Russian Journal* by John Steinbeck, who visited the Soviet Union in 1947.

The villains of this play range from the cynical, ruthless, and fanatical editor down to the weak and despondent alcoholic on the newspaper staff. They all appear in a most sinister light. In the production of the Moscow Art Theatre the editor was played by Prudkin, an experienced hand at villainous parts, whose interpretation was imitated on almost 300 Soviet stages which eagerly snatched up the Party-sponsored play. What the Soviet audiences saw as the typical boss of the "organized American press," was a dry, clean-shaven, strong-willed business man in his early sixties, with a firmly set jaw, impeccably dressed and well-mannered, with a rasping voice which would become harsh and contemptuous in moments of tension, particularly when the editor's fanatic hatred of Soviet Russia would burst forth with surprising violence. The characterization seemed to have the same relation to reality as the caricature of Winston Churchill in the *Krokodil* to an actual photograph of the British statesman. The editor's character and actions, which form the dramatic design of the play, lacked any substance of truth, even with Prudkin's realistic acting; it was as though both the author and the actor were groping for a figure that they well knew from outside, without being able to penetrate into its inner world.

In "The Court of Honor" by Stein, produced simultaneously in the Mossoviet and the Moscow Dramatic Theatre in the 1948-49 season, a new social type of the American villain was introduced to the Soviet audiences: Professor Carter, the American scientist, who works in close contact with Wood, the American intelligence agent, and with the political boss, Wilby. The main plot, however, does not center around these Americans, but rather about the Russian scientist Dobrotvortsev, whose discovery of a new anesthetic induces him (*horribile dictu est!*) to publish his findings in an American scientific journal. His humanitarian zeal and his desire of doing good to everyone, are, as we may have guessed from his allusive name, the cause of this unpardonable blunder. The moral problems facing a Soviet scientist, who wants to share his beneficial knowledge with the entire world, are of a serious nature, because his mercenary, American colleague is not so much interested in the anesthetic as in the secondary processes of the discovery, which may be used to produce a deadly biological weapon. The dark plot is foiled by a more perspicacious and class-conscious assistant, who, against

Dobrotvortsev's orders, does not deliver the serum to the Americans. Dobrotvortsev, called by his colleagues before a court of honor, recognizes that he was at the verge of betraying his native country. The chief American villain in this play is identified as a mercenary, cynical, and unethical scientist. He is motivated in his actions by a strange mixture of greed for money, cynicism in general and, again, by an irrational hatred for Soviet Russia. The theatrical make-up of all three villains, Professor Carter (the scientist), Wilby (the political boss), and Wood (the intelligence man), differed in the Mossoviet production considerably from the more realistic design of the American villain in the Moscow Art Theatre. Visibly typified by a very pronounced facial make-up towards the gloomy, the fanatic, and the wicked, Yuri Zavatsky, who can never quite deny his Meyerholdian school, created within the prescribed limits of "socialist realism" figures that seemed to make Hogarth's drawings come alive.

A somewhat similar, though more moderate and more realistic interpretation was displayed in the revival of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," produced by Tunkel in the Red Army Central Theatre. The new features of the production consisted mainly in a strong emphasis on the lynching of Negroes in the South (the question of slavery itself being probably a not too desirable topic of discussion at the present time). With some allowance for the historical period and background of the play, the Southern planters strangely resembled the figure of the political boss in Stein's drama. Such similarity, by no means accidental, was to symbolize the continuity of American wickedness and perversion.

The theatrical season in 1949 brought forth a whole galaxy of anti-American plays and an increasing number of American villains. Not only official pressure, but also rewards in the form of Stalin prizes, induced leading Soviet dramatists and newcomers to bid for popular recognition and Party favors by concentrating on the anti-American theme.

In March, 1949, the Vakhtangov Theatre staged under Reuben Simonov's direction "The Conspiracy of the Doomed" by Nicolai Virta. The play was very favorably reviewed in *Pravda* and became immediately a repertorial must for other central and provincial theatres. It was also produced in the Moscow Art Theatre by M. Kedrov, under its original title "In Some Country" ("*V odnoi strane*"). Such outstanding actors as Alla Tarasova, Prudkin, Bolduman were in the cast, and the Moscow production raised a

considerable amount of praise and favorable discussion in theatrical circles and journals. The unnamed country of the play is a *compositum mixtum* of various People's Democracies, such as Finland, Hungary, Poland, prior to their final Sovietization. Hanna Likhta, Communist woman and deputy prime minister of the anonymous republic, played by Alla Tarasova as a heroic and austere party leader, is the victim of two American villains: MacHill, a financial tycoon and Marshall Plan representative, and Kira Raichel, lady-spy and intelligence agent. Both manipulate the strings behind the coalition government, the Social-Democratic party, the Catholic church etc., in order to quench the growing dissatisfaction of the working masses and to make the country subservient to American financial and political interests. Their efforts are, of course, frustrated. In Soviet plays the wicked never win and virtue is always triumphant. (A symbol of how futile it is to oppose Communism). The American agents organize an unsuccessful attempt upon Hanna Likhta's life, but before they are able to engineer another attempt and overthrow the coalition government in order to outlaw the Communist Party, a popular uprising breaks out, and the conspirators are doomed to perish.

The theatrical mask of the American tycoon involved in this plot is that of a middle-aged, respectable looking, but inwardly wicked and soulless man. To stress this discrepancy, the author has found it necessary to make him a vegetarian, a trait which presumably represents for the playwright a suspicious anomaly. In addition to this, he has the conventional facial features of an energetic, smooth and ruthless businessman. The woman agent stands somewhat apart in the gallery of American villains, since most of these are men. But except for her age (indicated as 33), she hardly differs from her male counterpart. Both are well-dressed, use the same abrupt and cynical speech pattern, and display the same emotional hatred for all things Soviet. An additional trait consists in the grim and vulgar humor, allotted to both the financier and the spy, a trait which seems to have been lifted and somewhat incoherently applied to both from the Hollywood version of a "tough guy."

In all these plays (except the "Russian Question"), the dramatists placed the American villains into a Soviet locale or into an Eastern-European setting, both relatively familiar to the authors. A step towards the West, as it were, was made by Vadim Sobko in his play "Behind the Second Front," in which the American villain is placed in a British middle-class environment. The villain at work

in the West is Sam Gibson, an American business-man who bribes a staff officer of the Royal Air Force in order to prevent the bombing of a German war-plant. He also eliminates (not too successfully, of course) a troublesome eye witness of his wicked deeds, Tanya Yegorova, the Soviet girl, whom he dispatches temporarily to a concentration camp conveniently erected by the American Army in the vicinity of the British home, where most of the action takes place. Two other American characters are thrown in for good measure; a silly, jazz-crazy, gum-chewing officer, commandant of the concentration camp, and a sympathetically drawn Negro GI who helps Tanya engineer her escape from the camp.

In the November, 1949, production of the play in the Maly Theatre under Zubkov's direction, the American villain differed somewhat from the previous theatrical pattern. He was younger, only about forty years old, and wore, in conformity with the author's stage remarks, the uniform of a colonel of the U.S. Army. But this is just a convenient camouflage for his actual work: "Yes, almost thirty hours ago, I became a colonel. A very comfortable suit for travel. But it's business, of course, which leads me here. . . ."¹ This new variety of American villainy is embodied in a very dynamic and cheerfully cynical business man who is presented as a well-mannered, smooth individual, entirely devoid of any moral inhibitions. He is even endowed with some amount of intelligence, but appears amusingly frank about his real intentions. To his British partner, who ventures a few cautious remarks about the moral aspects of sparing a German factory in which V1 and V2 are being manufactured, he replies cheerfully and unconcernedly about the effects of his decision: Arthur Crosby (the British partner): "Profitable, indeed. But our country, the blood of our sons, our duty, our honor. . . ."

Gibson (the American villain): "All these words are outdated. My country is where I have money. I am a citizen of the world. And the more people who forget where their native country is, the better for both of us, my dear Crosby. The dollar, that's my native country. And where it comes from, I really don't care."

Thus, slightly rejuvenated, slightly more cheerful, the same type of amoral mercenary egotist is identified as a representative of

¹Russian text of the play in *Zvezda* No. 7, July 1949, p. 3 ff.

American villainy. Apparently, even the Western setting has not improved him.

The last development seems to consist in presenting a purely American scene, with villains contrasted and foiled by "good" Americans. This attempt is embodied in two plays: "The Voice of America" by B. Lavrenev and "The Mad Haberdasher" by A. Surov. The first takes up the case of a liberal, progressive American who has acquired friendship and understanding of the Soviets during the war. Captain Kidd, an archeologist in civilian life, whose America is that of "Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt," wants the war-alliance with Russia to be continued after the end of hostilities, but the representatives of the "America of Morgan, du Pont, Dulles, Hearst, Rockefeller, and Wall Street" do not. The conversion of Capt. Kidd from a sentimental American protestant to a fighting Communist, set against the background of corrupt senators, lobbyists, gangsters, policemen, and greedy middle-class women, betrays the ambition of the author to present a broad dramatic vision of the whole American society and to give an interpretation of the allegedly existing political, social, and economic conditions in the United States. The play provides, therefore, a good example of what the Soviet audiences must accept as a realistic picture of the Americans and the American way of life.

The chief villain and actual driving force behind the wicked plots is Herbert D. Wheeler, a U.S. senator from Alabama. He appears in the expository act to make a speech to a decimated company of an American regiment, just after Capt. Kidd, the company commander, has received for exceptional bravery two decorations, an American and a Soviet one. Senator Wheeler, like Sam Gibson in Sobko's play, makes his entrance in the uniform of a general of the U.S. Army. He is man in his sixties, stout, very flabby, and with cheeks that almost hang over his collar. The author's stage remarks call for a fierce and gloomy facial expression, a pipe in his mouth, and several other specific American attributes, which no Soviet dramatist dares to ignore. The senator's voice is, of course, senatorial, but he is entirely deprived of the humorous overtones with which the American business men are supposed to comment upon their own wretched plots. Without any further ado, the senator launches into an amazingly frank explanation of his motives for coming to Europe in these last days of the war: "Americans, I congratulate you in the name of the good old Senate. We now have broken the back of the Germans. Order and law will be restored in Europe. Neither

the Fascists, nor the Communists will be able to suppress other nations any longer. We will take care of that. From now on, nothing will happen anywhere without our knowledge and approval. We have the right to do this because our American way of life is the most reasonable in the world. . . . Soldiers, when you return to your homes settle your accounts with the traitors who receive their orders from Moscow. We Americans are predestined to save the world from Communism. We shall fulfil this task. We shall break down the Iron Curtain lowered by the Communists over Eastern Europe. We must immediately prepare for war with the Russians. They are the main enemies of America, and we must destroy them."² Somewhat later in the play, the senator erupts again with similar pronouncements, advocating the "social disinfection" of the United States. The real nature of the senator, as seen by the dramatist, is revealed to the audience by Capt. Kidd in the following remark: "Tell Wheeler, that his biography may have some interest for the American public, and that I will make every effort to present it in the most colorful way possible. I will open the eyes of Americans to his dealings in foreign currency in the American zone of occupation, to his connections with German firms during the war, and to his disgusting betrayal of American interests and of the lives of American soldiers. You think I am not strong enough to do this? Fortunately, your own press likes muck-raking and will, for sensation's sake, sling dirt at anyone. In America, in your own camp, there are newspapers which will be very happy to drown Wheeler in the mud. . . ."

No wonder that Wheeler, being such a complete villain, engages a couple of professional killers to dispatch the crusading archeologist to the other world. The amusing side line in this unpleasant transaction is that the killers are being called to the senator's office from some reading room in the Congressional building where they seem to have their permanent headquarters.

The next figure after the senator is the investigator of the Committee of Un-American Activities, who bears the ominous name of Scundrel (apparently, intended to read as the phonetical transliteration of "scoundrel"). To make sure that the linguistically untrained audience does not miss the point, the author makes Capt. Kidd remark to his wife: "I have been invited to the Committee of Un-American Activities. Don't you think that the name of the investigator, one Mr. Scundrel, meaning villain, rascal, is quite

²Russian text of this play in *Zvezda*, No. 8, August 1949, p. 7 ff.

symbolic?" The investigator is placed for somewhat mysterious reasons into a most gloomy Victorian setting. His office in Congress appears on the Soviet stage as a dark room with old-fashioned furniture. Seated in a Gothic chair, Mr. Scundrel, about 55 years old, dry and cadaverous, stiff as if he has swallowed a yard-stick, with a facial make-up that is intended to resemble President Woodrow Wilson, with a narrow, high forehead, slick hair, and horn-rimmed glasses, sunken cheeks and a pointed protruding jaw, is the most villainous of all villains. Neither the dramatist, nor the stage directors have spared any theatrical device to make the Soviet version of an American inquisitor the most repulsive being in the gallery of American rogues. To add color, Wheeler and Scundrel are shown plotting against Kidd's life, and the investigator is compared to a mummy, while the senator supposedly resembles a toad, both of them represented as animals in the human disguise engaged in a wicked attempt against decent human beings. Scundrel's investigation of Kidd's case is a masterpiece of inaccuracy and vicious misrepresentation. On the Soviet stage the grotesque scene borders on self-persiflage, whether intentional or not. Even before Kidd is called to appear at the investigator's office, his dismissal from the Army is engineered, so that he may not enjoy the protection of the Secretary of Defense. The Soviet decoration which Capt. Kidd, for some unknown reason, wears constantly on his jacket, is of course considered by the investigator as an open revolt against all things American. Scundrel, who, incidentally, conducts the whole investigation without any witnesses, secretaries, or stenographers, installs a hidden voice-recorder, asks the most provoking questions, and is obviously out to ruin Kidd's life and reputation. At the end of the interrogation, he asks Kidd when he returned from his last visit to Soviet Russia, a question which induces Kidd to reply that his ancestors had come from Scotland to America four hundred years ago. (We note that this would set the landing of these mythical Scotch Pilgrims back to 1548!) At a certain point of the investigation, Scundrel threatens Kidd with complete financial and social ruin, and when the infuriated hero throws the American decoration at him, Scundrel even pulls a pistol out of his pocket. In brief, all possible wickedness has been so lavishly bestowed upon this perfect villain, that he seems to develop into a highly grotesque but not particularly frightening shadow of the total evil.

The numerical proportion of villains in this play as compared with the actual figures is so exaggerated that an average Soviet audience

must certainly carry away the impression that senators, congressional investigators, lobbyists, corrupt policemen, and gangsters form at least seventy percent of the American society.

The last and most aggressive anti-American play of the 1949-50 season is the satire "The Mad Haberdasher" by A. Surov, which draws a grotesque picture of Mr. Truman's political background and career. The play contains a complete gallery of American villains with only two positive figures to oppose the impressive array of American wretchedness and corruption. In a foreword to the play, Surov states that "the play is a satirical comedy. It could also be called a 'pamphlet.'" The author is least of all interested in a pedantic reproduction of the details of the American "byt." But, says Surov, let the stage director and the actors be truthful in the main thing—in the characters, in their thoughts, in the motivation of the action of the cast,—and not fear the satirically sharpened presentation of these figures. In this particular case, the satirical and realistic elements are identical.³

Thus, the play aims again to draw a broad social canvas of American life in a small town, with the customs, habits, and manners of the average American. However, what Soviet audiences have seen in this play is as fantastically remote from any reality, American or otherwise, as it possibly could be. The plot itself is more of a "bufonata" than a realistic account of human actions. The haberdasher Charley Marchel, resident of a small town in Missouri, begins to impersonate Adolf Hitler, induces a traveling saleswoman to pose as Eva Braun, and is readily snatched up by Robert Hard, the local Democratic party boss and editor of the county newspaper, as a profitable sensation. The actual purpose of the editor is, however, to increase the circulation of his newspaper and "to advertise the Atlantic pact." On advice of a senator (unnamed in this play), the idea of Adolf Hitler's revival is dropped, and Charley Marchel is launched upon a political career under the slogan "the little fellow from Missouri."

The cast contains all known standard types of American villains: the senator, the political boss, the editor, newspapermen, body guards, gangsters, businessmen, and even female villains—a rather attractive sales woman, who later becomes the mistress of "the little fellow from Missouri," besides the prostitutes and bargirls. In compliance with the previous pattern, the senator is drawn as a tall,

³Russian text in *Oktiabr*, No. 11, November 1949, p. 145.

amiable and well-mannered man who has an amazing ability to deceive people by his respectable appearance. His theatrical make-up has been apparently copied from the whiskey advertisement "the man of distinction." He smiles constantly, his puffy and rosy cheeks even have dimples; he resembles a slightly aged but still attractive angel. However, when he puts on his eyeglasses and begins to talk business, his eyes become cold, his voice contemptuous and harsh. The concept of the inner workings of the senator is based upon the usual irrational American imperialism and hatred of the Soviet Union. Looking at the map of the world, he exclaims, "Look here! This is the Soviet Union, and here, around her borders, are our military bases, in the North, in the East, in the West, and in the South. We have already hundreds of them. But there will be more. This is our American way. . . ."

Robert Hard, the political boss, is a man of approximately sixty, wiry, lean, and well-preserved. His animal-like strength is symbolized in the make-up by bull-like facial features while his complex of chauvinistic superiority becomes manifest in his contemptuous attitude towards anyone who criticizes the American way of life. Strangely enough for a party boss, he is interested and well-informed in world affairs, and a large map of the world decorates the wall of his office, where he plots against the Soviet Union: "Now about business. We will explain to the Americans why we have to attack Russia first . . . Two great tasks face us at present . . . One is to exterminate the Communists, the other to destroy Russia. The rest is unimportant . . . I am now sixty . . . When I will be sixty-five, there will be only one party, and here into this frame we will put the portrait of the president of the world."

The main figure of the play is not its main villain. Compared with the senator and the political boss, the haberdasher Marchel is a small-size rogue, just a business man by vocation and inclination. Quite consistently with this, he is allotted a more youthful appearance and more attractive facial and physical traits. He has deceptively sympathetic wrinkles around his eyes, a quick and not unpleasant smile and, of course, the conventional stubborn jaw which, at least in the conception of Soviet dramatists, seems to be the most typical attribute of the American face. For theatrical performances, the haberdasher is required to wear "conservative suits," so that he may look like a standard American business man from a standard American town.

The haberdasher—the author takes great pains to explain it in

lengthy stage remarks—is full of ambition; he is a small business man with great appetites, sly, egotistic, and cheerfully corrupt. Hence, the main motivation of his dishonest actions is not based upon the irrational American imperialism, but rather upon a compulsive mercantilism, which he professes with the usual frankness that makes all these figures, regardless of their alleged wickedness, suspiciously innocent and harmless in the eyes of non-Soviet audiences: “Americans love money. Money loves business. Business does not like frontiers. Frontiers raise prices. Frontiers block business. Frontiers are the heritage of the past. Yesterday we said ‘America for Americans! The whole world for America!’ is what we say today; we the businessmen, you and I, senator.”

Like Sam Gibson in V. Sobko’s “Behind the Second Front,” Marchel is not entirely deprived of some human features. These are symbolized by the usual mixture of cynical humor and a weakness for the other sex.

We can now draw a synthetical picture of the American villain as he appears on the Soviet stage. The first interesting fact is that he is never young. His physical make-up usually indicates a man of about forty to sixty years of age, with such features which usually (and not only in Soviet conception) are assigned to the pioneer type of Americans, or to a successful business man who made good against all social and human odds. His graphic type may be easily recognized as confined to a few prominent traits; he is tall, often stout, abrupt in his gait and speech. Or else, he is lean, cadaverous, and endowed with a protruding strong jaw. It is easy to note that this picture is reduced to the bare essentials of some common prototype.

The American villain is always outwardly respectable, but inside he is sheer darkness and deviltry. His strong will is directed towards inhuman objectives. He lacks human warmth and even human frailty. He is a solid, compact piece of ill-will and soulless egotism. Love appears in him and for him only as a sexual impulse. Sympathy, friendship, human understanding are for him words without meaning and never enter into his feelings as possible motives. He is never shown in the circle of his family. Thus, his psychological make-up is reduced to a few rudimentary traits.

Socially, the villain belongs either to the financial aristocracy, the upper middle-class, or is on his way to climb the social ladder. His preferred occupations are either politics (senators are especially favored), or high finance. The latter profession is exposed as containing the most wretched and fanatical villains at the top of the

American scale of wickedness. One grade below stand the editors, publishers, and influential newspaper men. This type is shown by the Soviet dramatists as being in the service of a powerful conspiratorial organization, Big Business. Personal success and ambition have more weight with them than with the first group, and sometimes their thirst for power is mitigated by personal interests and considerations. The prime moving force for this type of the villain is money, but to a certain extent he also appreciates other material pleasures of life. As we have seen before, he is not completely devoid of a certain cynical cheerfulness and humor and has even some tolerance for what he considers the weakness and idiocy of the positive heroes. This is as far as Soviet dramatists will (or perhaps may) go to add psychological complexity to this type.

At the bottom of the villainous scale we find the spies, reporters, gangsters, corrupt police officers, members of the American Legion. All these are mercenary and corrupt, but some stress is put upon the fact that they are dishonest by necessity of their social standing. They are not the forces but merely the products of American society. In consequence, they are allotted the biggest share of human traits, consisting mainly of weakness, frustrated emotions, and some rudimentary sympathy for other members of the same group and even for the "good" Americans.

The upper classmen of villainy are the most schematically drawn figures. Their hatred for the Soviet Union and their thirst for political power are never explained and remain abstractions, motivated in themselves. The propagandistic intent of these figures gives to them the typified, rigid character of wicked characters in a medieval mystery. The less important villains are attempted as realistic portrayals, but the lack of human complexity and convincing motivations reveals their dogmatic origin. It is obvious that the basic source for all these creatures of the "American hell" has not been American reality.

It would be easy to dismiss all these plays and all these American villains as artless propaganda and to explain away all shortcomings of the American characters as they appear on the Soviet stage simply by pointing out the political educational function of the Soviet theatre in the services of party policies. This, of course, is partly correct. But it does not explain why the Soviet dramatists have precisely selected a particular graphical pattern and the rigidly canonized mannerisms, speech, and behaviour habits, which we have detected in our selection of anti-American plays. The fact is

that even Soviet dramatic propaganda can be much more subtle and penetrating without incurring the wrath of the Party, as has been demonstrated in some war-plays by Leonid Leonov and others.

It is also true that Russian dramatists from the time of Griboedov and Gogol have almost always tried to intensify the characters of their satires and comedies to grotesque types. But at the same time, they have always tried to describe, at least approximately, an actual social type, a real protagonist, a live model, to maintain some reference to reality even in the most condensed dramatic caricature. And it is precisely this quality that is missing completely in the American villain.

It is obvious that political and propagandistic reasons, added to the lack of artistic freedom and of personal knowledge of actual American life and environment, are essential causes. But these elements provide only a partial explanation. Simonov's "The Russian Question" was written after his visit to America in 1946, and in it we find almost the complete set of clichés applied by Soviet dramatists in subsequent anti-American plays.

The essential reason for the intrinsic lack of realism and truthfulness in all these plays is that the actual source for the character of the American villain was not life, but literature. And it was not literature in a broad sense, but two specific pieces of Russian literature, namely: Maxim Gorky's tale "The City of the Yellow Devil" and his satirical interview with "One of the Kings of the Republic." These pieces, no literary gems of Russian literature even by Soviet critical standards, have provided the substance from which the Soviet dramatists have shaped their version of the American villain of today. Pressed by the directives of the Party to give dramatic form to the problems and hostilities of the cold war against the United States, the Soviet authors, unable to go back to a more immediate personal experience have eagerly and exhaustively used this source. Virta, Lavrenev, Surov, Sobko, and even Simonov demonstrate in their plays that they have studied neither American reality, nor American literature, but have heavily drawn upon an outdated Russian source which contains almost all features of the American villain, as presented today to the Soviet audiences. Even a superficial scrutiny of Gorky's texts will disclose that the highly romanticized condensation of social evils in America, of the political corruption and of subjugation of human emotions to "money-making" are concepts derived from Gorky's accounts. It is characteristic and interesting to note that on March 29, 1949, at a time

when the demand and pressure for anti-American plays was apparently very high, *Pravda* reprinted Gorky's tale "The City of the Yellow Devil," thus establishing the classic model to be followed for all further descriptions and characterizations of American capitalists. But this official step has only sanctioned what had been previously practiced by Soviet dramatists.

A brief examination of some ingredients of Gorky's American accounts will disclose that the romantically condensed atmosphere of gloom, misery, and greed in "The City of the Yellow Devil" (New York) is still taken by Soviet authors as a realistic description of urban life in American cities. Gorky's inhuman millionaires, whose God is money and whose life is a senseless service to it, are the prototypes for the current version of American villains. In the imaginary interview with "The King of a Republic" we find almost every single feature that has been used by Soviet playwrights for their caricatures of American life and society. For example, Gorky gives the following description of the millionaire: "He looked quite like a normal being and even resembled a new-born child." Surov used this trait for his senator in "The Mad Haberdasher." Gorky writes: "Generally, the man resembled an old servant of an aristocratic European home." Surov paints the haberdasher as a "conservatively dressed servant." The theme of the innate, unmotivated greed of the American business man is also based on Gorky's version. Gorky writes: "'What do you do with your money?' (I asked). He raised his shoulders slightly, his eyes were still fixed at me, and he replied, 'With this money I make new money.' 'What for?' 'To make more money.' He bent forward and asked me with a shade of curiosity 'Are you mad?' 'And you?' asked I." The abrupt speech which the Soviet dramatists consider an obligatory trait of all Americans is directly derived from Gorky. Charley Marchel's curt exposé of his mercantile creed, Sam Gibson's frank statement about his commercial deals, and other similar pronouncements of American villains, all are patterned after Gorky's model, as can be seen from the following passage: "I have railroads. Farmers produce goods. I deliver them to the markets. I calculate how much I should leave to the farmer to keep him from starving. The rest I take myself for transportation. Very simple." ("The King of a Republic"). Other passages from the same source disclose the same laconic style, and, incidentally, the same naive frankness with which the villains always disclose their own plots. For instance: "Government? An interesting question, yes. A good government is necessary. It has the

following task: populate the country with as many people as I need to sell them all they can buy from me. There must be as many laborers as I need. But not more. Then there shouldn't be any socialists. No strikes. The government must not impose high taxes. Whatever the people can give, I can take it myself. That I call a good government."

Even the main theme of American villainy, the dream of world domination, is derived from Gorky: "America is the best country in the world. . . . Americans are the best people in the world. They have most of the money. No one has as much money as we have. Therefore, the world will soon be ours."

Thus, Gorky, the official "father of the Soviet literature," is also the father of the American villain on the Soviet stage. All distortions and falsifications in the physical make-up, motivations, speech, and manners of these alleged Americans betray unmistakably this literary ancestry. The heritage of Gorky, who was never able to depict artistically and truthfully any other social or national group except that of the pre-revolutionary Russian "*meshchanstvo*" and who slipped constantly into a tedious, romanticized, and sentimental pathos whenever his immediate experience was too limited, has been fatal to all Soviet anti-American plays. Basing their dramas on this weak foundation instead of upon American reality, which may have provided a sufficiently broad target for good and pungent criticism, the Soviet playwrights have only succeeded in depicting none other than the lifeless puppets they found in Gorky's tales. Though born in the years after 1945, all these plays and all these American villains are actually miscarriages, grotesquely outdated and bloodless caricatures without bearing any reference to the target at which they have been aimed. This literary biography and genealogy has, it seems, largely defeated the purpose of anti-American dramatic satires. Though it is hard to assess the actual impact of these "pictures of American life" upon the Soviet spectators, there is some indication in the repertorial bills of the leading Russian theatres for the 1950-51 season that, essentially, these plays have failed to grip the Soviet audiences.

After Twenty Years*

By R. V. IVANOV-RAZUMNIK

"The days' upheaval is completed . . ."

—Alexander Block

I

LONG ago, in my early youth, I used to forget the world over the foolish but fascinating novel by Alexander Dumas *Vingt ans après*. I have borrowed my title from it, straining a point, however, since there was an interval not of twenty but of nineteen years between my first and my second imprisonment. Later I shall outline the principal landmarks of my personal history; here I shall only note that the events of 1901-1902 altered the direction of my whole life.

At the University I studied mathematics and physics with great enthusiasm. Professor O. D. Khvolson, the physicist, took an interest in me and had a fellowship in mind for me for post-graduate studies in his special field; I wrote several papers for him. At the same time I followed courses of the historical-philological faculty, devoting special attention to the lectures and seminars of our eminent sociologist Lappo-Danilevsky; studied the history of literature with Professor Zhdanov, psychology and the history of philosophy with Professor A. I. Vedensky, Greek literature with F. F. Zelinsky, and attended various other courses. Where did I find the time and strength, I wonder?

Then came my deportation to Simferopol in 1902. In that town I found no facilities whatever for laboratory research in physics; but I was able to pursue my literary studies without hindrance; and I had the good luck to make the acquaintance of the owner of an excellent library on Russian literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I began collecting the material for a long-planned book,

*The author's unpublished reminiscences, *Tiurny i ssylki* (Prisons and Deportations), an excerpt of which is printed below, present a human and historical document of unusual interest. The bulk of the manuscript deals with the author's experiences in Soviet prisons during the period of intense terror under the NKVD chief, Ezhov (1937-38). Here we are printing a translation of a part of the first chapter of the MS., written in Germany in 1944. The author died on June 9, 1946. Several other excerpts from the MS. will be printed in subsequent issues of *The Russian Review*. The material is copyrighted, 1951, by George Jonkauskas [Ed.].

a history of the Russian intelligentsia. I started with what was to be the last chapter, an essay on the "Attitude of Maxim Gorky towards Contemporary Culture and Intelligentsia."

After a year in Simferopol, I was allowed to settle in a remote part of the province of Vladimir, on the estate of the parents of my fiancée who became my wife in 1903. Here I worked hard on a book that was published in 1906 in two volumes, under the title *A History of Russian Social Thought*. This determined my future career as a writer. Were it not for my exile in 1902, I would have never found the time for such an extensive work and probably would have remained faithful to physics, with literature as a hobby; I might have ended up as a venerable professor in such a politically harmless field as physics, and presumably would have escaped all the deportations and imprisonments that were in store for me. Whenever I met Professor Khvolson in later years, he would chide me for having betrayed the queen of sciences—physics—for such foolishness as literature. But, after all, the choice had been made for me by circumstances. My fate had been decided by the "kind solicitude" of the government and by my long exile.

Here I shall not go into details concerning my further literary and public life. One thing I wish to make clear; in the controversy between Marxism and Populism (*narodnichestvo*) I took the side of the latter, writing against Marxism and crossing swords with its cleverest exponent, Plekhanov, and its most light-minded one, Lunacharsky. All this was brought up and held against me a quarter of a century later, during my examinations by GPU and NKVD.

Although I shared the "populist" ideology, I never joined the party which represented it politically, that of the S.-R. (Social-Revolutionaries). I "walked alone," like the cat in Kipling's tale. However, I took an active part in the literary undertakings of that party and became the literary editor of its review *Zavety* (Bequests) and, after the Revolution, its daily paper *Dielo Naroda* (The People's Cause). When, in the autumn of 1917, the S.-R.'s split into a right and a left wing, I sympathized with the latter and took charge of the literary sections of its daily—*Znamya Truda* (Labor's Banner) and its review *Nash Put* (Our Way). All this was duly entered into the black books of the Cheka and the GPU, and I was destined to pay for it sooner or later.

In July, 1918, a year and a half after the Revolution, the left S.-R.'s organized the assassination of the German ambassador von Mirbach in Moscow and an uprising against the Bolsheviks which was ruth-

lessly crushed. *Znamya Truda* and *Nash Put* were closed. All non-Marxist, non-Communist literary activities became impossible. At that time, V. E. Meyerhold organized the TEO, Theatrical Department, and proposed me to work in the Theoretical or Repertory section of that Department. The latter was headed by Alexander Block. I was active in these sections throughout 1918-19. During the same period, together with Alexander Block, Andrey Biely and others, I was busy organizing the Free Philosophical Association ("Wolfila"), which actually came into being at the end of 1919, and existed for five years. All these activities were far removed from politics and confined to the fields of culture, philosophy, literature, art; nevertheless, the Bolsheviks had not forgotten me.

The terror of the era of War Communism was then in full swing. Every day "hostages" were arrested and shot; real and imaginary plots were exposed one after another. In February, 1919, a conspiracy of Left S.-R.'s was uncovered which in reality never existed but, nevertheless, resulted in a series of severe repressions. The day came when I, too, as so many others, was engulfed in the wave of arrests.

In January, 1919, I fell ill with pneumonia. By the middle of February, I had sufficiently recovered to get up and walk around my room. On February 16, at 6 P.M. I was peacefully sitting in my study at Tsarskoye. The doorbell rang; V.N. (my wife) went to open it; a little man of Oriental type (an Armenian) in civilian clothes rushed in, brandishing a gun; he was followed by a soldier with a rifle. The Armenian, an agent of Cheka, presented a search warrant, put away the unnecessary weapon, forbade me to move, and got ready to start the search. However, at the sight of book cases with thousands of volumes, of a filing cabinet overflowing with papers, of a desk loaded with letters and manuscripts, he was taken aback and visibly lost heart. He collected at random a package of letters, a manuscript, a thick notebook with material for a book I had just begun: *The Vindication of Man* (it was then entitled "Anthropodicy" and this word obviously aroused his suspicions). For two hours he helplessly fumbled around the bookcases, picked out a few volumes dealing with anarchism, made up a small parcel, and by 8 o'clock the search was over. It all seemed rather funny. Then he told me to get ready; he was taking me to Petersburg. I packed a few things in a small suitcase—a towel, soap, a change of underwear, a mug. Those were hungry days; and all the food V.N. was able to give me was a lump of bread and a small box of

sugar-candy. And since we were short of money, too, I could take with me only two "kerenkas" at 20 rubles each. I took leave of my family, arranged with V.N. that she would notify Meyerhold of my arrest, and walked to the station, escorted by the two men, a wearisome walk for one so recently recovered from illness. The train was nearly empty; my escorts paid no attention to me; I sat in silence, remembering my journey to prison twenty years before.

We reached Petersburg at 9 in the evening, and, in a car of the Cheka, were driven to "Gorohova 2," the notorious center of the Bolshevik secret police and simultaneously a transit prison for all arrested persons. I was ushered into the registry where I had to fill out a form with preliminary biographical data, and then was taken up an endless staircase, up and up skywards. Soon I was to get acquainted with the cellars of the Cheka, but I began with the attic. My convoy turned me over to a gloomy warden who, with much jangling of keys, opened the door of this subcelestial prison before me and shouted: "Starosta! Number 195!" The starosta (foreman), a prisoner, came up to me, welcomed me with a grin, registered my name, and we went together in search of a place for me to sleep.

The attic consisted of two large rooms connected by an open door and dimly lit by a few naked bulbs overhead. Some 200 men crowded the rooms, most of them asleep, and it was by no means easy to find a vacant bunk. At last, a group of prisoners, sitting on their bunks, took me in as their "fifth." They explained that the prisoners were divided into "fives," each group of five forming an independent "dinner unit." At mealtimes, they were given a separate bowl of food for the group. The prison population was fluctuating, and new lists were made up and new "fives" were formed every day.

Tired out, I stretched myself out on the bare boards of my bunk, listened to my companions, and wondered what had brought me here.

Two prisoners from the other room came up to me and called me by name. I recognized them—they were workingmen, belonging to the Left S.-R.'s who had often called at the office of *Znamya Truda*. They told me that for the last three days arrests had been going on among members of the Left S.-R.'s on the charge of participation in a conspiracy of which no one of them had the slightest knowledge. They supposed that my arrest had some connection with this matter. They proved to be right.

Slowly the attic quieted down. Despite my fatigue, I could not sleep. The boards were too hard, and the foul air of the overcrowded room was stifling. Swarms of bedbugs added to the discomfort. At every moment the warden would throw the door open and call out some name: "For examination!" The starosta had to look for the owner of the name among the sleeping crowd, arousing every time dozen of others. I was dozing off when towards 3 after midnight I heard my own name called up.

I was taken down to the second floor, into a brightly lit room. Behind a desk sat a young man in military uniform—the examining magistrate. I recognized him at once. About a year before, he had been a member of the Left S.-R.'s and I had often seen him hanging around the office of the party's Central Committee which was next to the editorial room of *Znamiya Truda*. We were not acquainted, and he had every reason to believe that I did not know him. Shortly before the assassination of von Mirbach he had vanished from our horizon, had gone over to the Communists and now had emerged as a Cheka examiner charged with the task to investigate, or rather to cook up, a case implicating his former party comrades in a non-existing conspiracy.

He made me fill out the usual questionnaire. After a glance at it, he said:

"You have made a false statement. To the question 'Were you a member of any political party?' you reply: 'No party membership.' Now cross it out and write the truth: 'was a member of the Left S.-R. party.'"

"This I cannot do," I said, "because it would not be true. I never was a member of that party."

"And yet you were often seen at the Central Committee; you were a member of it, weren't you?"

"What if I was seen there? After all, you were constantly dropping in at the Central Committee yourself; does that mean you were a member?"

He reddened. All at once his manner became rude.

"Your lies won't help you! I'll bring all your doings to light! Member or no member, you certainly played a part, probably a leading part, in the conspiracy that has just been uncovered. You better come out with it! A frank confession will make things easier for you. Here—he pointed at the paper,—write here the truth."

In the spot he indicated I wrote that I had for the first time heard

of the alleged conspiracy from the examiner himself, and therefore could have had no part in it.

"You are going to regret it," he said. "I advise you to think it over."

He turned his attention to the parcel of books and papers taken from my study. The word "Anthropodicy" puzzled him and he asked for its meaning. He closely studied my little notebook with addresses, and copied out the names and addresses, each on a separate piece of paper. I did not like this at all, and, as it turned out, with good reason. For a whole hour he busied himself with my papers, while I was left in peace "to think it over." At last he finished, made up the parcel again and said:

"Well? Have you changed your mind?"

"No, I have not."

"A pity! We both are educated people, aren't we? We ought to understand each other. But you refuse to understand that your stubbornness will aggravate your fate. Now sign here, and expect the worst." "I shall hope for the best," I said, putting my signature to the paper, and then was led back to the attic. It was 4 A.M.

An hour after this, at 5 A.M., cars of the Cheka, as I learned later, were dashing off to various parts of the city, seeking out my friends whose addresses I had so imprudently jotted down in my notebook (I never repeated that mistake). The following persons were arrested: the poet Alexander Blok; the writer Alexey Remisov; the historian M. K. Lemke; the writer Yevgeny Zamiatin; professor S. A. Vengerov, and some others, all living far apart from each other. What brisk activity was being displayed by the Soviet organs of vigilance!

All my arrested friends were brought to "Gorokhova 2." Instead of being sent up to the attic, where they might have conspired with me, they were locked up elsewhere. One after another they were summoned for questioning, and each in turn was surprised to learn that he was charged with participation in a conspiracy of Left S.-R.'s. Each one reacted to the absurd accusation according to his temperament. The aged Professor Vengerov remarked calmly, "I have heard many absurdities in my life, but this one tops them all." Zamiatin burst out laughing, which greatly shocked the examiner—after all, it was a serious matter, wasn't it? But all his efforts failed to convince the arrested men that they were conspirators and members of the subversive party. Then he made them write down their answers to the following questions: "How long

have you known the writer Ivanov-Rasumnik? On what terms are you with him at present? Have you talked to him lately, and what about?" After having answered these extra questions, the dangerous political criminals were dismissed, to be released in the course of the day and allowed to return to their homes after a detention of less than 24 hours.

There were two exceptions: Zamiatin who was released immediately after the examination, and Alexander Block who was held longer than the others and sent up to the attic.

Zamiatin later recounted his dialogue with the examiner as follows: In answer to the question: "Did you ever belong to a political party?" he had written: "Yes, I did."

"Which party?" asked the examiner, anticipating a major political charge.

"The Bolshevik Party."

Many years before, as an undergraduate, Zamiatin had indeed joined the Bolshevik Party whose rabid enemy he became after the Revolution. The examiner was taken aback.

"How's that! Then you are still a Bolshevik?"

"No, I am not."

"When and why did you leave the Party?"

"Long ago, for ideological reasons."

"But now, after the Party's triumph, you surely regret your desertion?"

"I do not."

"Explain, I don't understand."

"Why, it's simple. Are you a Communist? A Marxist?"

"Of course."

"Then you are a bad Communist, a bad Marxist. A good Marxist knows that the stratum of petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers tends to disintegrate and that the workers alone provide a reliable class basis for Communism. Since I belong to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, I fail to understand why you are so surprised at my defection."

The examining magistrate was so impressed with this ironic argumentation that he set Zamiatin free on the spot.

The case of Alexander Block was different. He was obviously connected with the Left S.-R.'s. His poem "The Twelve" first appeared in *Znamya Truda* and so did his cycle of articles "Revolution and Intelligentsia," which was also published by the party as a separate pamphlet. Block's poem "The Scythians" appeared in the review *Nash Put* and was issued by the party separately with my

introduction. Clearly he was a Left S.-R.! For that reason he was subjected to a lengthy examination and while the others were allowed to go home, he was transferred to the attic. By then I was no longer there. A. S. Steinberg, our future "Wolfila" secretary, was brought in at the same time and occupied the bunk next to Block. A year after Block's death, Steinberg's vivid reminiscences of that night of February 14 spent by the poet of the "Twelve," who had saluted "triumphant freedom," in the attic of the Cheka, appeared in the "Wolfila" symposium dedicated to the poet's memory. On the following day Block was released.

Back in my bunk after the interrogation, I tried to go to sleep, but by seven the whole attic was already astir. Now in daylight I had a good look at my fellow-prisoners. What a motley of races, tongues, social classes, of faces and clothes! Russians, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Jews, Latvians, even several Chinese; former army officers, workingmen, students, soldiers, civil servants (some of the highest rank); non-party-men and members of various parties, mostly Socialists of every denomination; political offenders and common criminals; clad in ragged sheepskin coats, business suits, worker's jackets, Russian blouses, uniforms—a cross-section of the nation. . . .

I approached several groups. They were all discussing the same subject: the possibility of an "intervention" by mythical "allies" and in that case the inevitable evacuation of Petersburg by the Bolsheviks. Throughout the night, the distant roar of artillery had been heard. . . . And if the Bolsheviks have to get out, what will they do with us? Set us free? Shoot all and sundry? Divide the sheep from the goats? The overwhelming majority had the answer ready: all would be shot!

Early in the morning, huge kettles were brought in with a hot liquid that passed for tea, and every prisoner was given an eighth pound of bread. The hot liquid, whatever it was, cheered me up. But the general mood of the attic was one of utter dejection. What a difference from the prison of my student days twenty years ago! No jokes, no laughter, no loud discussions. Crowded as it was, the room was strangely quiet; even the common criminals, even the anarchists were subdued and shared in the mood of anxious waiting. They all regarded themselves as hostages doomed to be shot as a measure of "social defense"—a measure so freely applied by the Cheka in that period of War Communism. Moreover, those who had already spent a few days in the attic suffered acutely from hunger.

The midday meal, called "dinner," was indeed appalling. Every

"five" were given a bowl filled with some brown mush, strongly smelling of herring. Armed with wooden spoons, we sat down around the bowl, each waiting for his turn to take up a spoonful. It is impossible to give an idea of the look and taste of this nauseating concoction. Five bits of a half-rotten herring floated in the bowl. I took out my lump of bread brought from home and divided it into five parts. Supper, they said, would be exactly like "dinner." But by then I was no longer there. Little did I suspect that I would have my next meal five days later!

Shortly after "dinner," there was a stir outside, the sound of footsteps, the clatter of arms. Several Cheka men entered, one of them holding a list. He called out names, and those called up stepped forth with their "belongings" and took position by the door. Soon I heard my own name. There were some sixty of us. We were taken down to the prison yard and told that our destination was the prison on Shpalernaya Street. The gate swung open, we marched out into the street, convoyed by some twenty men. It was a cold and sunny day, the streets were filled with people who gloomily watched our procession, without giving any sign of emotion; everyone knew he might become a unit in such a column any day.

We reached Shpalernaya without incident. There was the prison (House of Preliminary Detention); we were turned over to the administration. The usual procedure of registering began. The heavily whiskered warden, apparently a veteran of Tsarist times, was rude but efficient.

After the registration the newcomers were distributed among different wards. I was placed in solitary confinement in cell No. 163. Years later, I was to spend many months in that same cell, so I postpone its description until I come to that period. To be alone was pleasant after the crowded noisy attic. It was 2 P.M. At six they brought in "supper," a bowlful of some hogwash which I left untouched; it looked even worse than the attic soup. I ate some bits of candy and drank water from the faucet. At 8 o'clock I was summoned "with belongings" to the registry. The same whiskered old-timer examined me, checking my answers with the questionnaire I had filled out on arrival. Then he turned me over to my convoy, three young Red Army men with rifles and tightly packed haversacks. A car was waiting in the street, we got in and were rapidly driven through the dark streets to the Nikolayevsky station.

They were taking me to Moscow.

(To be continued)

Book Reviews

SMITH, WALTER BEDELL. *My Three Years in Moscow*. Philadelphia, Lippincott Co., 1950. 346 pp. \$3.75.

THOMPSON, CRAIG. *The Police State. What You Want to Know about the Soviet Union*. E. P. Dutton & Co., 1950. 257 pp. \$3.00.

KASENKINA, OKSANA. *Leap to Freedom*. Philadelphia, Lippincott Co., 1949. 295 pp. \$3.00.

"The business of living for three years in the Soviet Union results in accumulated observations which are reasonably accurate." In these words, General Walter Bedell Smith who from 1946 to 1949 was American Ambassador in Moscow tells the reader what he can expect to find in *My Three Years in Moscow*.

Obviously, statements about what the author observed, what he saw or heard, are most important. A few such statements might be singled out. When, for example, the Kasenkina affair occurred, the Ambassador was asked to come directly to the Foreign Office. This office, usually a world of orderly quiet, was in considerable confusion. When reading his hastily prepared protest, the usually imperturbable Molotov stammered and was obviously angry.

When telling a high-ranking Soviet official that he was going to the Cathedral to attend the Easter service, the Ambassador heard these baffling words: "I wish I could go too." What the author saw at the Cathedral is summarized in these words: "The Party could not produce, among the Soviet masses, even a shadow of the genuine emotion

which was stamped on the faces of the thousands of worshippers." On occasions when the Ambassador visited the only Catholic church in Moscow, he saw Russians crowding the building, even filling the aisle ways. The persistence of an independent spiritual life, concludes the author, is one of the important and mysterious things that have transpired in the Soviet state.

When discussing with General Smith the problem of allowing an additional number of American reporters to attend the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, Vishinsky explained that, to house these reporters, the Soviets would have to evict many people from hotels. "And these people are not exactly shopkeepers," added the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs. This, says the author, was quite unexpected on the part of a leader of the "classless society."

After having introduced Mrs. G. Meerson, the Israeli Minister, to I. Ehrenburg, the Ambassador heard this crude remark on the part of the latter: "I do not speak English, and I have no regard for a Russian-born Jew who does speak English." According to the author, this was representative of the developing pattern of official anti-Semitism.

In the course of the 1947 elections, General Smith visited several polling places. In his presence, an old woman asked an official "How do I vote 'no'?" She was politely shown how to do it; what followed could naturally not have been observed by the Ambassador.

On some occasions the author explicitly mentions that he was pre-

vented from seeing things he wanted to see. When visiting the Stalin Auto Works, he was refused entrance to the assembly plant under the pretext that the workers were out for lunch, but through a gap in the door he could see that the motor assembly was proceeding at full speed. When visiting a collective farm, he understood from a conversation in Russian, that he was not to be shown the interior of an average peasant house.

He had "a unique personal experience" when contacting the world of Russian science. It was concerned with the famous K—R cancer serum. Somehow, the Ambassador managed to see the inventors. As a result, the secretary of the Academy of Medicine under whom they worked was tried and sentenced for revealing secrets of Soviet science; the Minister of Health himself was dismissed some weeks later.

In addition to direct observations, the author offers reports about events he learned from hearsay. During the years of his stay in Moscow, there were Jewish pogroms in the Ukraine. There are 15 million "involuntary workers"; but this figure includes youth drafted according to the decree of 1940 as well as many categories of people not confined to the labor camps. The author rather cryptically implies that Voznesensky, a junior member of the Politbureau, whose disappearance startled the world, was executed.

Naturally, the author makes a number of generalizations, on the basis of his direct or indirect observations. He emphasizes the disbelief of the Communist leaders in the ability of the people to regulate their own life and to govern themselves. The average citizen, he says,

is conditioned mentally to the chance of arrest. The men in the Kremlin aim at world domination.

A large number of the authors' interpretations are sound. Unfortunately, he consistently tries to understand the whole pattern of Soviet life in terms of Russia's past. In this he is often inspired by reports of the American Ambassador to Russia written in 1852-53 and by the writings of de Custine, a Frenchman who visited Russia in 1839. In General Smith's opinion, the men in the Kremlin have revised the teaching of Marx and Engels to fit Russian organizational concepts and to revive the Tsarist tradition of despotic power. In consequence, Soviet expansion is merely a continuation of Russian expansion, though now directed by a more intelligent and disciplined leadership. The corrupt Tsarist régime, he believes, could never have withstood even a fraction of the strain and adversity which the Communist Party and government have endured and overcome. He seems to forget that, in 1812, Russia lost Moscow, but survived.

As to the continuity between old and new Russia, the author reports a conversation with I. Ehrenburg. "Russian culture," said the Soviet author, "is beyond the intellectual comprehension of the Westerner." General Smith disagrees with this statement and observes that the West understands and appreciates the cultural giants of nineteenth-century Russia. Yet he apparently fails to see that a gulf separates the culture of old and new Russia and that no sufficient explanation of Russia's present can be given simply by reference to her past.

The other books under review are of less importance. C. Thompson's

The Police State is the work of an American reporter who stayed in Moscow from March, 1945 until April, 1947. It is not so much an account of personal experience, as an attempt to give a picture of the Soviet Union to an intelligent American audience. Here are a few salient points.

Lenin was a natural autocrat and a pseudo-philosopher. Therefore, it is wrong to say, as many do, that Lenin's revolution was good, but was corrupted by Stalin. Communism does not reflect the political aspirations of a majority of the Russians. The progress of Soviet industry under the Five Year Plans has not changed the fact that even now the main preoccupations of the Russians are food, clothing, and housing. Had the rate of progress which existed between 1900 and 1913 been allowed to continue without Lenin's interference, the Russians would have achieved a far higher standard of living than they now have. Soviet medicine is fundamentally sound, but archaic. The arts today display symptoms of *rigor mortis*. As in all similar works, a number of errors in detail may be detected, but it seems hardly worth while emunerating them.

Mrs. Kasenkina's book is an autobiography of the Soviet teacher whose dramatic escape from the Soviet Consulate in New York caused a sensation, not only in this country, but also in the Soviet Union. The book contains an interesting feature; namely, a picture of life in "Soviet America," that is, in Soviet institutions on American soil. The main traits are absolute segregation from American life, and jealousy and hatred among those confined to these institutions. The picture is preceded by an unpre-

tentious narrative of the life story of a woman who was born and bred under the Tsars. The story of her famous leap to freedom from the second floor of the Soviet Consulate is not well told. The author's ideas and emotions, at that time, were probably so confused that a fully intelligible account was not possible.

None of the three books opens new horizons but all may be considered as contributions to America's understanding of the force opposing it everywhere in the world.

N. S. TIMASHEFF

Fordham University

JOHNSON, WILLIAM H. E. *Russia's Educational Heritage*. Pittsburgh, Carnegie Press, 1950. 351 pp. \$5.00.

It is a commonplace that contemporary Soviet institutions can be understood only against a penetrating analysis of Russia's historical traditions. The political scientist who would ignore Pestel, Bakunin, Nechaiev, and Tkachev in seeking to comprehend the growth of the All-Union Communist Party since 1917 seems doomed to failure, or at best, to superficiality. Likewise, the educator who is unaware of the sweeping educational reforms initiated by Catherine II or of the character of the later educational reaction led by such ministers as Prince Golitsyn (under Alexander I) or Count Uvarov (under Nicholas I) seems similarly hampered in any attempt to grasp the meaning of more recent developments. The comparative dearth of good, scholarly, historical material available to the increasing number of educators desirous of understanding these

traditions is what renders Professor William H. E. Johnson's book, *Russia's Educational Heritage*, extremely welcome at this time.

The stated purpose of the volume is "to present an integrated view of the educational background of a great nation, especially through its efforts to erect a satisfactory system of teacher education." Actually, however, the focus on teacher education is but an organizing theme for a study of the much broader realm of educational program and policy during the last three centuries of the Tsarist régime. Beginning with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when education was largely under clerical and domestic auspices, Professor Johnson traces the establishment of various types and levels of state schools, the unification of many of these into a national system, and the development of this system through the early months of 1917. Special chapters are devoted to the history of the main Pedagogical Institute at St. Petersburg, to the status of teachers in the last two decades of Tsardom, and to early developments in Russian educational philosophy. A concluding chapter attempts to relate some of the historical data to the contemporary educational scene.

One or two of the salient points in the study, insofar as they indicate its merit, seem to warrant brief discussion. Professor Johnson gives extensive attention throughout to the influence of Western European personages and ideas on Russian educational policy. A rather interesting pattern emerges: namely, a direct relationship between social and political liberalism and the extent of Russian educational contact with Western Europe. Beginning with the reign of Peter I, one sees definite

signs of an open "window on the West." The Academy of Sciences, opened in 1725, was actually the result of an extended correspondence between Peter and the German philosophers Wolf and Leibnitz. Moreover, the Academy itself, in its early years, carried on with a German faculty and a Western European student body. The influence of Western ideas is even further noted in the comparatively liberal spirit of scientific inquiry urged for teachers in 1833 by Vassili Nikitich Tatishchev who had been a close collaborator with Peter on pedagogical affairs.

This Westernism was continued and reinforced by Catherine II who, like Peter, looked abroad for her educational ideas. The invitation to Diderot to compose a plan of Russian school organization in 1773, while it yielded no appreciable practical results, is illustrative. The distinguished Serbian educator, Jankovitch de Mirievo, as a member of the Commission for the Establishment of Schools, was influential in the founding and supervision of a normal school in St. Petersburg and the procurement and translation of textbooks. Furthermore, at a time when only two students were enrolled at the University of the Academy of Science at St. Petersburg, wealthy young Russians were to be found studying at many of the major Western European universities—Glasgow, Leipzig, Göttingen, Paris, Oxford, etc.

When Professor Johnson points to the contrasting situation in the half century immediately after Catherine's death, however, the full import of the relation between liberalism and foreign educational contact emerges. Catherine's ardor for reform, it will be remembered, was

dimmed considerably by the peasant revolts of the 1770's. Under her son, Paul I, a period of intense reaction was ushered in; and among the harshest of his repressive edicts were those calling back Russians studying abroad and limiting the entrance of foreigners into Russia. While these measures were abrogated early in the reign of Alexander I, a trend had begun. With the burning of Moscow in 1812 and the establishment of the Holy Alliance in 1815, the movement toward reaction was accelerated. The public educational system became an arm of the Holy Synod charged with the preservation of orthodoxy, and the participation of foreigners was severely limited. When the trend reached a peak under Nicholas I, Minister Uvarov proclaimed the educational doctrine of orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationalism under which the rôle of foreign ideas was patently nil.

Clearly, this traditional pattern deserves the most serious consideration. As Professor Johnson points out in his conclusion, "Much of the same oscillation has characterized the Soviet attitude toward foreigners, and the pendulum has swung from the proffer of enormous salaries and unusual privileges during the 1930's to the present reaction bordering upon xenophobia."

Another point of considerable interest concerns the traditional relation between schools and other agencies of public information. In his introduction to a recent translation of sections of the *Pedagogika* by B. P. Yesipov and N. K. Goncharov, Professor George S. Counts points to the extreme breadth of the Soviet conception of education. It includes, as those who have followed the resolutions on ideology since

1946 well know, not only schools, but all organizations capable of enlightening and moulding the mind—the press, radio, motion pictures, clubs, social groups, etc. Professor Johnson furnishes important evidence to support the conclusion that this conception has significant roots in the Russian tradition. When the Ministry of Education was established in 1802, for example, it was given extensive jurisdiction over all public libraries, museums, and public and private printing presses. Furthermore, it was charged with the responsibility of censoring all printed matter. In the periods of reaction under Alexander I and Nicholas I, this grant stood as a powerful precedent for general government supervision of all agencies of public communication.

Professor Johnson has included an appendix carrying a number of excellent tables presenting in outline important financial material, attendance statistics, etc., for the years covered by the study. The extensive bibliography bears brief comment. At first glance, one is prone to compliment the author on his inclusion of many fine primary sources heretofore unavailable in the United States (Professor Johnson's readers will profit from his bibliographical activities during his three-year stay in the Soviet Union), but then to question his support of many facts with secondary or even tertiary sources. The latter practice is in great part explained, however, by the destruction, loss, or unavailability in the Soviet Union of numerous primary sources formerly accessible to scholars. It must be added that Professor Johnson has selected his secondary sources wisely, drawing on such reputable authors as Vladimir Simkovitch, Daniel B. Leary,

and Thomas G. Masaryk. Moreover, in many cases, he has cited two or more independent sources in support of a contention. Even so, one may well be concerned, for example, over the support of comments regarding Diderot's *Plan d'une université pour la Russie* with citations to an encyclopaedia article and a secondary source rather than to the original Diderot.

In sum, Professor Johnson has given both educators and students of Russian affairs an important one-volume study of Russia's educational heritage under the Tsars. Its careful and painstaking analysis clearly negates the widely held notion that there was little or no educational activity in Russia before the Revolution and shows how much of a tradition there was for the Soviets to build on. Readers of this study will be rewarded with a wealth of factual and critical material highly useful in interpreting contemporary developments.

LAWRENCE A. CREMIN

Teachers College
Columbia University

ARAKELIAN, A. *Industrial Management in The USSR*. Translated by Ellsworth L. Raymond. Washington, D. C., Public Affairs Press, 1950. 168 pp. \$3.00.

This monograph is one of the "Current Soviet Thought" series which are prepared under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council.

There are seven chapters to the study, the first of which deals with 'Forms of Management in Capital-

ist Industry." This essay of some fifty pages has no organic connection with the rest of the work. The remaining six chapters deal with development of the managerial structure and the principles of management in Soviet industry; the organizational structure and administration of Soviet industry; conversion of the war production economy to peacetime; and the rôle of the Communist Party and trade unions in management.

The first chapter which purports to be a critique of capitalist industry is extremely thin and lacks insight. It is as if the author had planned a primer on industrial organization of the West relying only on the usual Soviet biases. However, the critique somehow doesn't quite come off, possibly because of the translation, but more likely because of the very content of the work.

The criticisms of capitalism and the contradictions in its institutions are offered by Mr. Arakelian in what has become a standard form. It is indeed surprising that the Soviet critics of Western society rely so heavily on clichés which often go back to Marx and Engels, rather than devoting some time to a fresher, more original, and more relevant approach. Any social system has at least some change in it, and capitalism is no exception. Analyses of fifty or a hundred years ago are not often currently relevant, even if they were correct when they were made.

Mr. Arakelian's notion and knowledge of monopoly or stock market operations, for example, when put on paper, make him a threat to the learning processes in the Soviet Union. Just one example will indicate what I mean. On pages 11 and 12, he devotes several para-

graphs to the plural voting of preferred stocks. Dewing, in his great work on *Financial Policy of Corporations*, has a mere footnote to indicate that in a few cases plural voting of preferred stock is resorted to when a company has passed up dividends to preferred shareholders and there are not enough preferred shares outstanding to give a reasonable voice or control to their owners. Yet in the hands of Mr. Arakelian, the process of plural voting becomes not an exceptional procedure, but a means of exploiting holders of common stock. With respect to monopoly, Mr. Arakelian scarcely mentions the legal restraints imposed by legislation in the United States or the competitive restraints existing in markets generally. This is not to say that monopoly is not a problem in the Western world; it means simply that Mr. Arakelian doesn't know very much about the problem.

I feel that the time and effort spent by Mr. Arakelian in his discussion is largely wasted, and I wonder that the responsible officials in the Soviet Union would risk confusing the minds of Soviet students and technicians by permitting them to read this chapter.

The remainder of the book deals with the problems of Soviet economy. Outside of the material on the organization of industry, there is little to recommend the work. Mr. Arakelian insists on the obvious, namely, that cost and cost accounting systems are necessary in any production undertaking using large quantities of capital and labor. He also hammers continuously at the necessity of profits. My own feeling is that he hasn't defined profits and tends to confuse profits as a payment for risk with monopoly profits which are a payment for what might be

considered the strategic position of the monopolist. The criteria by which resources are allocated for use are not discussed, yet this is surely one of the crucial issues in any capital-using and capital-conserving economy.

If Mr. Arakelian's discussion of the administration of Soviet industry is correct, something is wrong with that industry. On page 129, he points out that the introduction of assembly line production during the war led to increases in efficiency of as much as 200 to 300 percent. This indictment of pre-war production is indeed serious and, I am inclined to believe, unwarranted.

It was rather surprising not to find any discussion of personnel administration and grievance procedures. Apparently, the Russian factory doesn't have any such organized procedure, but rather relies merely on trade unions to enforce labor legislation, work time, vacations, etc. The notion of compromising personnel and labor problems does not appear in Mr. Arakelian's analysis.

SIDNEY C. SUFRIN

Syracuse University

WHITE, JOHN ALBERT. *The Siberian Intervention*. Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press. 1950, 471 pp. \$6.00.

The events revealed and discussed in the book under review were of "tremendous significance," asserts its author in his concluding pages. The peoples of the Allied Nations "were unreceptive to the idea of interfering with the new government in Russia, the exact nature of which

was poorly understood." There was disunity among the intervening foreign powers. The Siberian Intervention failed, as "the well-developed organization and discipline of the Bolshevik Party was a force which stood in contrast to the universal confusion, uncertainty, and disintegration which accompanied the dissolution of the old political order." These words point out how instructive is a book which discloses the mistakes and difficulties of the Siberian Intervention.

Mr. White drew his conclusions after a thorough study of the dramatic events of the Civil War in Siberia in connection with the foreign intervention. This period had been elucidated by many authors, but mostly from the point of view of participants, whose memoirs, if not biased, were nevertheless one-sided or dedicated to some particular events and periods. *The Siberian Intervention* is the first comprehensive work depicting various stages of the Civil War and Intervention in Siberia on the basis of manifold sources and, so to speak, from an "outside" point of view. It is, therefore, a valuable work in spite of some defects of organization and not always judicious choice of references.

It is, however, a hard job even to describe the most important events of the confused period of the Siberian Intervention. In order to show its complexity, it is enough to mention that during the five years of the Civil War in Siberia, from 1918 to 1922, there were formed and disappeared—to mention only the better known and besides Admiral Kolchak's government—the Siberian Provisional government in Omsk, Derber's government in Vladivostok, the government with Gen-

eral Horvath as a Provisional Ruler, the Zemstvo government in Vladivostok, the All-Russian Directorate in Ufa, Ataman Semenov's government in Chita, the brothers' Merkulov venture in Vladivostok and, as an epilogue, General Dietrich's paradoxical attempt to inspire the population and troops with the beliefs and institutions of seventeenth century Muscovy.

Some readers will be annoyed by the number of facts, names, and data which have scarcely any historical significance. Others will find in J. White's book omissions and some inaccurate statements. Only the most important of these are worthy of mention.

Thus, it was not necessary to include in the history of the Siberian Intervention a survey of the early Russian advance into Siberia and of the Trans-Siberian Railway, but it is difficult to explain the absence of a short survey of General Denikin's campaign against the Soviets and its connection with the Civil War in Siberia. If the Siberian venture had any chance of success in its struggle against Bolshevism, it was only in coordination with the simultaneous anti-Bolshevik campaign in European Russia. With a population of about twelve million people, including several millions of non-Russians, and deprived of heavy industry and satisfactory communications, Siberia was doomed in its unequal fight with the Soviet government, which had at its disposal the densely populated industrial regions and a well developed net of railways. Dr. White has very ably characterized the discord among the interventionists and the lack of united plan and program of intervention, but he has said nothing of the lack of coordination between the

anti-Bolshevik leaders and of the dependence of Kolchak's success on the result of anti-Soviet struggle in European Russia.

It is also, in our opinion, an important omission not to mention such a momentous decision of Admiral Kolchak as his rejection of General Mannerheim's offer to take Petrograd in case of recognition of the independence of Finland. That decision was at the same time very characteristic of the "white movement" with its slogan, "united and indivisible Great Russia." For the same reason General Horvath did not agree to concede to the Japanese the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway in exchange for assistance against the Soviets. Kolchak secured at the last moment national gold reserves which were captured in Kazan, transferred to Omsk, and recaptured in Irkutsk. He was no less consistent in observing principles which he took for a guide than the Americans, who did not support any government not considered by them to be "truly democratic." The Soviets were and are more flexible in both principles and tactics, and it was therefore difficult to compete with them in both the diplomatic and military fields.

The book under review is a history not only of the Intervention but also of the White movement. The failure of the Intervention was a result of both the inadequacy of anti-Soviet leadership on the part of various Russian governments and of the shortcomings of the Intervention itself. The activities of the governments are described mostly in a very dark color, but the author does not forget to mention the objective difficulties: distant bases of supply, lack of commodities, and interrupted

communications (pp. 276, 298, 308). As a matter of fact, the author consistently emphasizes the negative sides of the Anti-Soviet governments. On the other hand, the negative sides of the Intervention are depicted with some reservations. Japan carried out its own imperialistic goals of forming "The New Inland Sea"; the United States' intervention was a counteraction against Japan without any intention of supporting Kolchak; France was most interested in supporting the Czech troops. All this is correct. But the negative rôle of the Czech troops in Siberia is not depicted sufficiently and justly, especially the traitorous act of the extradition of Admiral Kolchak. The Czech version is not correct; there are other evidences to which Dr. White does not refer. All too often he prefers to rely on authors who did not witness the events themselves, ignoring the memoirs of the participants.

Besides the history of Civil War and Intervention in Siberia, the book also contains a well-documented and detailed history of American-Japanese rivalry in the Far East. The Siberian Intervention was a decisive moment in this rivalry and, in a sense, the prologue to Pearl Harbor.

In spite of some serious defects in organization (the reader must constantly return from the more recent period to the earlier one), and some inaccuracies impossible to list here, the book is interesting and valuable as a reference work for future historians. It also has much which contributes to an understanding of the present international situation. In 1949, the United States withdrew active support from the Nationalist government in China.

It is still a problem whether it is necessary and expedient to interfere with the civil war in Indo-China. *The Siberian Intervention* gives convincing evidence that an intervention having no definite program and sufficient support on the part of the population is doomed.

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